







「ジロー。ボクから、
一つお願いがあるんだが、いいか？」

「……お願い？」

「……うん」

ちよっただけ、近衛は恥ずかしそうに
口唇を噛みしめた。

そして、

不器用ながらも、「生懸命言葉を発して」

「ボクと……」

デートして欲しい」

まぢ！

Chapter 1: Sudden Emergence.

“Doesn’t Onee-sama like you, Nii-san?”

In the Suzutsuki Residence, without its master, maid Kureha let free that bombshell of a statement.

“.....”

.....What? That’s what she was talking about?

“Kureha, one thing.”

“Nya? What’s up, Nii-san?” My little sister tilted her head like a small animal.

I had to let out a sigh, and exclaimed, as I was wearing my dog costume.

“Like hell that’s the case.”

“Ehhh, you think so?”

“Yeah, not happening. There’s no way that rich lady would have feelings for me.”

We’re talking about Suzutsuki Kanade, or Devil Suzutsuki for short. Well, that’s how I secretly call her, but she truly is like the devil himself. Normally, she acts like an honor student at school, keeping up a mask to hide her real sadistic personality. The difference between the two is too great. She’s scarier than Asura. And yet you’re telling me that she is supposed to have feelings for me?

What a horrible joke. If you keep dreaming about this kind of stuff, you won’t be able to become an adult, okay. Who are you, Peter Pan? You need to differentiate dreams from reality. If not, you’ll long for Peter Pan and jump out of the window.

“But, I really do think it’s that~”

“Where’s your proof?”

“Um...a maiden’s intuition, maybe?”

“That’s too vague a proof if you ask me.”

“My sixth sense.”

“Trying to make it cool doesn’t improve it at all.”

“Nya, it’s often on-point, you know? For example, I got a good grade on the previous math exams, and I pulled a winner with the last GariGari-kun I ate.”

“What does that have to do with a maiden’s intuition!?”

“Maybe it’s my Kureha-chan Radar.”

“Kureha-chan Radar?”

“It’s a treasured skill of mine that allows me to find your lewd books just by walking inside your room.”

“That sixth sense is way too dangerous!”

What kind of radar is that? If you have that at your disposal, become a fishfinder or something along those lines. Go chase marlins for all I care. Still, intuition, huh. I don’t want to admit it, but her intuition is trustworthy. When we watched boxing matches on TV, she observed the fighters and figured out the winner in the end. Her chance of guessing it correctly is a solid 90%.

It’s like a divine possession of sorts. If life ever becomes troublesome, we should go to America and bet on underground fights. Gambler Kureha, huh...I feel like it’s closer to a counter than a radar. However, this time around, she’s off. After all, there’s no way that Suzutsuki has any feelings for me.

“But, she always looks like she’s having fun when she’s with you, right?”

“That’s because she enjoys teasing me.”

“Mmmm, I wonder...” Kureha still didn’t seem satisfied.

Even if she did like me, it would probably reach a max at simply treating me like a pet. I don’t like to admit it, but she’s basically just playing with me. She did kiss me before, but that was all to tease me. There’s no way any romantic feelings exist.

“Masamune, you say something as well.”

“Eh? M-Me?”

In order to convince my little sister, I sought help from the maid next to me, Usami Masamune. Since she’s on bad terms with Suzutsuki, she should easily be able to support my argument.

“E-Ehm...”

However, Masamune crossed her arms, and started thinking. Eh? What’s that reaction about? Do you also believe Kureha’s assumption? Come on, be a bit more doubtful. Otherwise, you’ll fall for some scam in the near future.

“What are you getting lost in thought for? There’s no way she likes me, right?”

“But, we can’t rule out the what-if, you know.”

“What-if...”

“For example, we could have her pay money.”

“Paid dating!?”

“Or, we could use this as a weakness.”

“You’re clearly threatening her now!”

Like hell I could threaten Suzutsuki, I’m terrified of her. Just imagining her revenge, it’ll be a one-hit cross-counter.

“...Y-Yeah, you’re right. Masamune nodded, sounding more convinced. “Sorry, stupid chicken. It’s just as you said. There’s no

way that Suzutsuki Kanade has feelings for you.”

“Right? You agree with me.”

“Definitely. That’s just impossible. You chicken bastard and that rich lady, there’s just no way. You’re not a good match at all!”

“.....”

Um, Masamune-san, I don’t think you need to desperately deny it like that. It’s true that Suzutsuki and I live in completely different worlds. Eh? So we’re like Romeo and Juliet? It’s not that wonderful of a relationship, okay. We’re more like chicken and wolf. The difference between us on the food chain is no joke.

“That’s why, you shouldn’t get your hopes up. You live in different worlds. Rather than that rich lady...well, you should look for someone who matches your current lifestyle more.”

“Yeah, with similar values, the relationship will be much more smooth.”

“R-Right? It has to be. So remember that, okay.” Masamune puffed out her chest in confidence for some reason.

Why’s she acting so arrogant now? Are her back shoulders stiff? Or is that some Ina Bauer technique practice? So old, why now?

“H-Hey, Konoe, what do you think?”

“Eh...” A flustered alto voice responded to my question.

That’s right, this is Konoe Subaru, the cross-dressing butler of the Suzutsuki Family. As Suzutsuki is her master, she should know her, and understand that Suzutsuki would definitely not have feelings for me.

“...Yeah, right. That should be impossible. After all...”

“...After all?”

“...No, it’s nothing. Don’t worry about it.” She cut off her own words,

with a somewhat blunt tone.

Hmm, is she still hung up on that kiss from yesterday? Of course, I have my own regrets regarding that. Just talking to her has me blushing furiously.

“...But, what if...”

“Hm? What’s wrong? Have you come up with a different reason why she collapsed?”

“N-No, not necessarily. Not to mention, I feel like Ichigo was right, saying that it was anemia. Thinking about it, she wasn’t as energetic as of late.”

“She mentioned a lack of sleep, yeah.”

Not to mention that Ichigo-san talked about Suzutsuki worrying about something. She said that the reason for this might be me, but... I have no ideas. At the same time, it wouldn’t be weird if I was constantly pondering about Suzutsuki. Not to mention...Why did she invite her natural enemy Masamune here? Masamune can see right through Suzutsuki’s made-up nonsense. That’s why, she would always try to keep her away, and yet she now brought her even closer. Maybe...she had a particular reason for that?

“—I’m back.”

Right as I was lost in my thoughts, a robotic voice devoid of any emotion resounded from the entrance. Turning towards that voice, there stood a single maid, wearing usual maid clothes with a maid headband, and an unfitting eyepatch on her left eye—Saotome Ichigo. She previously had brought Suzutsuki to the hospital, and now greeted us like it was the most natural thing in the world.

“Ichigo! What about the young lady!? Is she okay!?”

The moment Konoe saw Ichigo-san, she jumped up with bloodshot eyes. I can’t blame her, she’s the one who was worried about Suzutsuki the most. Still, they got home pretty early, huh. It’s barely been three hours since they left. Maybe the medical investigation showed no irregularities, so they came back? Maybe Suzutsuki really

just had anemia.

“...Hm?”

There, a doubt popped up in my head. Hold on, why is it just Ichigo-san here? Where...is Suzutsuki?

“Calm down, Subaru. Before you go meet Kanade-ojousama, I need to talk with you about something.” Ichigo-san started explaining with an oddly insecure tone. “We had her get a medical check-up, but they didn’t find any physical irregularities. It was a simple anemia.”

“R-Really...Thank god...” Konoe sighed in relief.

But then, why isn’t she here? Maybe they had her stay in the hospital for the night...but, I doubt Ichigo-san would just leave her alone then.

“However...”

Right as we were relieved, Ichigo-san continued with the same tone as before.

“It’s not that nothing is wrong with her.”

“.....Eh?”

“It’s true that the medical investigation found no physical abnormalities with Kanade-ojousama’s body. However, they confirmed a mental abnormality.”

“.....” Konoe froze up, her mouth open in shock.

Kureha and Masamune were the same, we all looked like fish waiting to be fed. A mental abnormality? What’s that supposed to mean? Personally speaking, her sadistic nature is plenty of a mental abnormality if you ask me, but that’s not it, right? Maybe she suddenly turned into a proper human being after having collapsed? Like being hit as a child in order to improve?

“So—please don’t be shocked, even if you meet the **current** Kanade-ojousama.” Ichigo-san said so, and opened the door to the banquet

hall.

Standing there was a girl with glittering black hair, tied up into twintails—It was Suzutsuki Kanade, simply looking at us.

“...?”

Huh? I don’t see much change compared to before. She’s the same old rich lady—

“—Aha~”

There, the second our eyes met, she showed a somewhat innocent smile, and...

“...!?”

She suddenly ran towards me, leaping at me to the point of pushing me down on the ground. It wasn’t any wrestling movie you’d see up in the ring, but rather a childish and playful push.

“Ehehe~”

And then, she flashed an innocent grin you wouldn’t expect from the usual Suzutsuki Kanade. She wrapped her arms around my waist, and rubbed her head against my chest, and...Ah, crap. Because the costume is so thin, I can directly feel her softness on my body! My gynophobia is activating!

“H-Hey! What are you doing, Suzutsuki Kanade!?” A sharp voice rang out.

Looking over, Masamune was screaming at Suzutsuki, who was still on top of me. Konoe gave Suzutsuki a bewildered gaze as well, going ‘Y-Young lady?’. Kureha on the other hand just went ‘Ohh, what a beautiful form!’ as she went on the ground for the count. Who cares about all of that, just save me already.

“You can’t do that, Kanade-ojousama.”

Hearing Ichigo-san’s words, Suzutsuki flashed a teasing smile.

“I’m sorry. You were just so cute, I couldn’t help myself.”

“Wha...!?”

Konoe and Masamune froze up because of Suzutsuki’s words. I mean, I felt the same way. I was so cute she couldn’t help herself? The heck is up with that. The normal Suzutsuki would never say something like that even if she was tortured. Not to mention that her tone of voice was different. Almost like she had a bit of a lisp, something that a child would suffer from...

“By the way” Suzutsuki stood up, while staring at me. “Who’s that puppy?”

“Wha?” Being pointed at by her long finger, I looked at her in disbelief.

“He is our Odd Jobs-san. A fellow friend of yours at school, and a temporary servant who will be staying at our residence for a while.”

Since I was too shocked to respond, Ichigo-san took over to explain... But, why? Suzutsuki is the one who had me work here, right?

“I see. Nice to meet you, Odd Jobs-san. I guess I should introduce myself.”

“I-Introduce yourself?”

“Yep. After all, this is our first meeting, isn’t it?” She muttered with a childish tone as always, grabbed the hem of her skirt, and showed a polite bow.

And then, with an almost angelic smile, she continued.

“Nice to meet you. My name is Suzuchuki Kanade, and I’ll be 8 years old this year.”



Chapter 2: Attack Fräulein

“We don’t know why it happened.”

After Suzutsuki introduced herself, Ichigo-san explained the circumstances with her usual robotic voice.

“As I stated just now, the medical investigation at the hospital showed no irregularities. We imagined that maybe she might have hit her head during her fall, but there were no traces of that. According to the doctor, they were unable to find the reason for this. However, what they could tell us was—That the current Kanade-ojousam’s memories have been reverted back to when she was 8 years old.” She muttered with a tone that sounded like she was joking.

“8 years old...”

The heck is up with that? So she should be...a second-year in grade school? Back at that age, my little sister was already a little monster, often fighting with the neighbourhood puppy. Seeing a young girl slamming a golden retriever with its 160cm right onto the ground was quite the sight, but this isn’t the time to dwell in memories. So if her memories have reverted back to this state...so basically, it’s blocking the newer memories? That sounds like it could come straight out of a manga, men in black making you drink some suspicious medicine. As a result, your body stays that of an adult, but your brain becomes that of a child. Her name—is Private Detective Kanade.

“...Huh.”

Don’t joke with me. Like hell that happened.

“Ichigo-san, stop with the jokes. This is just more nonsense, right?”

That’s right, it’s all made up of jokes and pranks. It’s a party trick from Devil Suzutsuki again. I was deceived countless times before by her perfect acting, but I won’t fall for it again. Even now, she’ll burst out laughing, saying ‘You did well seeing through my act, Jirou-kun’.

“You agree with me right, Masamune?” I turned towards the maid next to me—Usami Masamune.

Masamune knows her true personality, and is dangerous enough for her to receive the name ‘Natural enemy’ from Suzutsuki herself. Made-up nonsense does not work against Masamune. According to the person in question, Masamune can easily see through Suzutsuki’s lies. It’s probably related to a lack of faith and trust in other people, but what’s most important is the potential. As long as she sees through Devil Suzutsuki’s lies...

“.....No.”

However, the words coming from the girl were unlike anything I could have expected.

“I can’t. Because...right now, Suzutsuki Kanade is not lying.”

“...What?”

No no no, what are you saying, Masamune-san. Where did your usual nasty rabbit attitude go? Was she bribed by Suzutsuki or something? Did she lose against the temptation of a carrot?

“H-Hey! Why are you giving me such a dubious gaze!? I’m confused, okay!”

“Confused...”

“Anyway! The current Suzutsuki Kanade is not lying. That’s what my instincts are telling me. That’s why, I know it might be hard to accept, but...Suzutsuki Kanade is serious.”

“Wha...”

It felt like I was slammed in the head with a blunt weapon. Then, what? Did she really turn into an 8-year-old again?

“Odd Jobs-san, don’t worry.” Almost like Suzutsuki had figured out my worries, she spoke up with an innocent tone. “I received an explanation from Ichigo just now. There’s no mistaking that I have turned into an 8-year-old. I don’t know the reason why, but my high

school self grew younger.”

“Make it sound so simple...”

“It’s fine. I might just turn back to normal soon enough.”

“Well, you’re not wrong, but...”

Wait, why is she cheering me up like this? Not to mention a young girl like her. Why is she so mature about this, simply accepting her own situation...She so easily understood that her memories reverted back? I mean, I get that Ichigo-san explained it, but to think she would keep such an objective view...That’s Suzutsuki for you.

I can see how she was supposed to be clever despite her young age. However, the current Suzutsuki didn’t seem as scheming as before, like she was just any other innocent child. Maybe childish Suzutsuki isn’t so bad...

“Also, I might as well enjoy this.”

“Eh?”

“Don’t you agree? The me right now suddenly received the body of an adult, so I want to taste all sorts of interesting situations.”

“.....”

Correction, she already had Devil tendencies back at a young age. Her basic thought process hasn’t changed. The moment she was born, she started seeking out excitement.

“By the way, who are you?”

“Eh, me?”

Suzutsuki pointed at Kureha.

“My name is Sakamachi Kureha, I am a temporary servant at your residence, just like Nii-san, Onee-sama.”

“Onee-sama?”

“Ah, Onee-sama and I are pretty close, so I’m calling you that way.”

“Ohh, I see.”

“But, suddenly changing my way of addressing you would be weird, so...can I just keep calling you Onee-sama like always?”

“Of course you can, Kureha-chan.”

“Thank you very much, Onee-sama!”

The two were smiling at each other like they were friends at a similar age. They really are a good match, especially since Kureha’s personality is pretty childish. That being said...

“Hey, Kureha.” I quietly called out to my little sister.

“Hm? What’s up, Nii-san.”

“I was just wondering, are you okay with this?”

“With what?”

“The fact that Suzutsuki basically turned into an 8-year old. She doesn’t remember us. And despite that, you were talking with her like you usually would.”

That’s right, it wouldn’t be weird for Kureha to feel awkward around her now. I’m a good example. Even if she’s still an adult in terms of her body, her mind was that of a child, creating this grave sense of discomfort.

“Hmmm...” Kureha put one finger on her lips, and started thinking. “She’s cute, so what’s it matter?”

“What?”

“I mean, Onee-sama right now is like a small girl, so she’s just adorable. The way she speaks, her smile, it’s not like the usual Onee-sama isn’t cute, but...I just feel like hugging the current Onee-sama, you know? She’s just so charming.”

“You feel like it, huh...”

I sort of understand what she’s talking about. Basically, it’s the gap. Usually, Suzutsuki had a calm and dignified atmosphere. That now changed into that of a young girl, which made her look more cute. It’s like that one time she was plagued by constant hiccups.

“Not to mention, just because she’s a young child doesn’t mean I can’t get along with her. Didn’t she say so? She might turn back to normal eventually. If so, then why shouldn’t we get along with the current Onee-sama.” Kureha grinned with a warm smile.

That’s the oldest daughter of the Sakamachi family for you, she’s got endless positivity. She’s amazing in that she can see something exciting about this.

“Well, you might be right.”

Just worrying about it won’t do us any good. Exactly as Suzutsuki said, she might turn back to normal quickly, and even if she doesn’t, since the doctor said that they couldn’t explain what even happened, we probably won’t find a way to resolve this all too quickly. Not to mention that we aren’t the only ones worried. Suzutsuki turned into an 8-year-old girl. Since she’s only a child in terms of her mental capacity, she must be anxious in this uncertain situation. If so, then we have to be the ones who have a grip on the situation. That’s why we need to try and get along with Suzutsuki.

“Hey, Kureha-chan.” Right as I was thinking that, Suzutsuki called out to Kureha.

“Yes. What is it, Onee-sama?”

“Can I ask one thing?”

“Of course, ask me whatever you want.” Kureha puffed out her chest in confidence.

Woah, she’s clearly acting like the older sister in this case. She’s probably feeling excited at the thought of having gotten a little sister, right? Oh yeah, she always wanted one, if I remember correctly. ‘I’ll make her my super ring partner!’, she would say. I’m so glad that she

didn't get a little sister.

"Well~" Suzutsuki showed a childish and innocent smile. "Why are you working, despite being only a child?"

".....Eh?" There, Kureha beautifully froze up.

"I mean, you're the same age as me right, Kureha-chan? Children shouldn't be working. You need to enjoy your childhood."

"Y-You're wrong, Onee-sama, I'm already in high school..."

"Ehhh? Even though you're so small?"

"!"

"And so flat?"

"!?"

"Really, acting mature like that. But, I forgive you. After all, I'm the Onee-chan. Don't you agree? You call me 'Onee-sama' after all."

"Nyaaaaaaa!?" Unable to bear with it anymore, Kureha screamed.

...This little girl is terrifying. It's honestly horrendous how innocent children can be.

"What should I do, Nii-san! Onee-sama is acting like the older sister now! She's not even wrong, and yet I feel like I lost!"

"Don't worry about it, she's just a child."

"But...but!"

"Kureha-chan, I'll play lots with you later. What do you want? Play family? Hide-and-seek?"

"Nyaaaaaa!? Stop! Don't treat me like a child!" My little sister was starting to tear up.

You can do it, Onee-chan. This is the trouble of having a little sister, so have fun.

“Well, don’t be so depressed.” I gently rubbed her head.

Because of my gynophobia, I had to stop right away, but if I show kindness and skinship, she might be more kind to me in the future. Like Mutsug*rou-san¹, there there there.

“...Mmm.” There, I heard a displeased voice.

When I looked over, I saw Suzutsuki Kanade looking at me. She was pouting like a small animal.

“Not fair.”

“Huh?”

“Not fair not fair not fair. Odd Jobs-san, you’re my servant, right? Then, you should pat me on the head, and not Kureha-chan.”

“Even if you say that...”

“Hurry up! This is an order!” Suzutsuki bit her lip like a small child... Waaaah, why are you tearing up now!?

Do you want your head rubbed this badly!? I really can’t tell what children are thinking!

“I-I understand.” I moved my hand away from Kureha’s head, and placed it on Suzutsuki’s.

Following that, I gently moved my hand up and down.

“Hehe, very well.” She acted bossy, but still smiled happily.

She really seemed like a young child.

“.....”

...Crap, how cute can she be? She may be a bit cheeky, but she’s a child, so I’ll forgive her for that. She might not look like a child on the outside, but the innocent air around her is covering what I normally expect when I see Suzutsuki. Just like this, I can see an actual younger Suzutsuki in front of me. And, more than anything...

“Urk...!”

“? What’s wrong, Odd Jobs-san? Why are you crying?”

“N-No, I’m sorry, I was just a bit moved...”

“???” Suzutsuki tilted her head in confusion.

That’s right, she’s just a child. How do I say this...she’s not black at all. She’s not a devil, nor a sadist. It’s like Yamitsuki-san never existed. Damn it...Why did you have to grow up like that?! Enough! I’ll raise this girl! I won’t let anybody take her as a wife! And even if she leaves me one day, I’ll make sure she will choose the right guy!

“...Jirou.”

While I desperately tried to keep my gynophobia under control, enjoying a bit of simple skinship with Suzutsuki, I heard a disgruntled voice from a certain butler.....I’m sorry, all of this just got to my head. That’s why, don’t stare at me like that.

“...Not fair.”

“Wha?”

I totally thought she’d get angry at me, saying something like ‘What are you doing to the young lady!?’ and was prepared to prostrate myself in front of her, but those were the words I heard instead.

“I-It’s not that I’m sulking or anything. Just, doing it only to the young lady is...” Konoe pouted like a child.

Eh? What? Why are my headpats so popular now? Does my palm hold some special power? Maybe it won’t take long for a weird emblem to appear on the back of my hand.

“Why not pat Subaru on the head as well?”

“Young lady!?”

“Come on, don’t hold back.”

“Urk...” Hearing Suzutsuki’s words, Konoe looked up at me with a ‘Jirou...’.

“.....”

...Now hold on. What is this? It’s not that I hate rubbing Konoe on the head, but I can’t find myself calming down. Maybe this is just an after-effect from the kiss yesterday. Or maybe I was reaching my limit with my gynophobia. I’m just giving out headpats, so why is my heart racing now?

“Odd Jobs-san.”

“Eeeek!?”

Right as I was about to place my open hand on Konoe’s head, I heard someone whisper into my ear—Saotome Ichigo. The eyepatch maid stood behind my back, glaring at me.

“How long do you plan on playing around with Kanade-ojousama?”

“B-But, the young lady asked for...Wait, something is hitting me! Something sharp is hitting my back!”

Also, she’s pretty much stabbing me already? Something sharp is burying its way into my flesh!

“How cruel, I was giving you a taste of my breasts.”

“Stop lying! Like hell there’s such sharp and sturdy breasts.”

“They’re D-cups though.”

“Like hell they are!”

“What are you talking about? D is for drills.”

“Drill-cups!?”

“Now, a question. What am I pushing against you right now?”

“I don’t feel like doing a quiz!”

“The hint is—chest.”

“Your breasts after all!?”

“You have five seconds to answer the question. Five, four, three...”

“A kitchen knife! A knife! A cutter! Any other weapon!”

“NO. The correct answer is...dinnerware.”

“...Dinnerware?”

“My chest is burning up like the ceramic in the kiln.”

“I didn’t take you seriously just to have that joke thrown at me²!”

I mean, I can respect the hassle. So the D in D-cups stands dinnerware? That is probably the greatest blasphemy I have ever heard.

“Oh yeah, who is that person?” Suzutsuki suddenly spoke up, and pointed at her next target.

Standing there was a girl with twintails, wearing the uniform of a maid cafe. It was the nasty rabbit Masamune.

“Hmpf, it’s a pain, but I’ll explain it to you. My name is Usami Masamune, and I’m a—”

“Kanade-ojousama, that person is a pet.”

“Who’s a pet!?”

“YES. Didn’t Suzutsuki Kanade say ‘She will be a pet from now on’ upon your arrival?”

“Suzutsuki Kanadeeeee!”

“Nice to meet you, Pet-san.”

“Don’t call me pet! My name is U-Sa-Mi, and I’m a temporary maid here at this residence!”

“Newcomer, using casual speech towards Kanade-ojousama...”

“It’s fine, Ichigo. Talking with her this way sounds much more interesting.”

“...Understood, Kanade-ojousama.” Ichigo-san nodded, albeit not really satisfied.

Seeing Suzutsuki’s friendly smile, Masamune let out a cold ‘Hmpf’.

“Hey, Suzutsuki Kanade, I don’t know how this whole memory thing works, but you’re eight years old right now, yeah?”

“That’s what this boils down to, yes, Auntie.”

“Auntie!?”

“Am I wrong? You’re clearly older than me right now.”

“That doesn’t mean you can call me Auntie!”

“Then...Usamin.”

“Why my nickname!?”

“Eh? That’s what Ichigo taught me.”

“...Ichigo-san did?”

In the face of Masamune’s question, Suzutsuki showed a smile, and took out a book. With this flow of events, is this the ‘A Guide On How To Keep A Pet Rabbit: Master It In 5 Minutes!’ again? I grew interested, and took a peek at the cover myself. There, the title that greeted me was...

“A Guide On How To Keep Usamin: Master As a Five-Year Old!”

“The title changed!?”

“It’s fine, I’m older than five, so I can master it no biggie.”

“I don’t want to be mastered by you!”

“Now, time to study. ‘Step 1: Usamin doesn’t have many friends’.”

“None of your business!”

“‘Step 2: Usamin is always in heat’.”

“W-W-Who is always in heat!?”

“Hey, Usamin. What does it mean to always be in heat?”

“T-That’s...”

“Kanade-ojousama, you don’t have to study that knowledge yet.”

“Really? Then I’m moving on. ‘Step 3: Usamin wants more mature underwear’.”

“Wha...!? H-How do you...!”

“Um...the creator of this book is...’Narumi Schrödinger’.”

“That damn loli woman...!!”

Masamune stole the book from Suzutsuki, and tore it to pieces. I see, so that whole thing was a prank on Schrö-senpai’s end. She really loves being childish from time to time, huh. I can see that she would give this book to Ichigo-san. They’re vice and club presidents after all, the handicrafts club network is no joke.

“Don’t be so angry, Usamin.”

“You’re asking for too much.”

“Geez, don’t be so cold. As proof of us making up, have this.”

“...What is this? “ Masamune accepted an object that looked like a ticket, and tilted her head.

Is this...a butler ticket? With this ticket, you can give Subaru-sama any kind of request you may have, right?

“That is...a master ticket.”

“Master ticket?”

“If you use this ticket, you can give me, your master, any order you please. Cheered up now?”

“I-I wasn’t that angry or anything...” Masamune looked at the master ticket, and started thinking.

Master ticket, huh. Maybe it’s like a close relative to the butler ticket? Giving that over so easily, Suzutsuki really is a child. Normally, Masamune would be Suzutsuki’s natural enemy, so that’s like you sent salt to your enemy.

“Ah, Usamin, what mature underwear were you thinking of?”

“...!? T-That’s...”

“Are you wearing some right now? If so, then show me.”

“Why would I have to show you!?”

“I wanna see mature and lewd underwear!”

“Be the child that you are, and read a picture book!”

“Ehhhh...”

“Kanade-ojousama, would you like to have a look at mine?”

“Yaaaay! Please!”

“What do you plan on showing to a child!?” Masamune frantically stopped Ichigo, who was about to lift her long skirt.

“Boring...” Suzutsuki started sulking.

...Children are amazing. If I said something similar, we’d go from being reported to being arrested to a trial to work to consolation money, a solid five-hit combo. Then again, the most amazing one is Ichigo-san, ready to show off her underwear just like that.

But either way, with this we’ve all introduced each other, so that takes care of it...

“Fuwaaaaah...” An adorable yawn could be heard.

Looking over, that yawn came from Suzutsuki, who rubbed her eyes.

“Kanade-ojousama, would you like to head to bed?”

“Yep. I’ve been up late today.” She said, and yawned again.

Stayed up late...It’s barely half past 10pm. Do children have that kind of rhythm?

“Kanade-ojousama, let me guide you to your room.”

“Thank you, Ichigo. But, before that...” Suzutsuki walked towards Konoe. “Subaru, let’s sleep together today.”

Immediately after, the two maids went ‘Whaaaa!’. Of course, I was referring to Kureha and Masamune. I can’t blame them, they still think that Konoe is a guy. They would surely get the wrong idea after hearing that. Suzutsuki said it like it was obvious, but Konoe stood frozen.

“Y-Young lady, that’s a bit...”

“Subaru, you’re ignoring your master’s order?”

“Urk...”

“W-What are you saying, Suzutsuki Kanade! Even if you are just eight, your body is that of a high school student! Of course you can’t do that!”

“But, we always sleep together.”

“Always!?”

“We even take baths together.”

“B-Baths...!”

“C-C-C-Calm down, Usamin-senpai, Onee-sama is only eight right now, so the wall between boy and girl is slim, yes!”

“Kureha-chan, why are you panicking like that?”

“T-T-That’s...”

“Ah, do you want to join us, Kureha-chan?”

“N-No thank you, the stimulus would be too much for me!”

“Stimulus?”

“Anyway! You can’t do that sort of thing with Subaru-sama right now!”

“Is it a bad thing if I sleep together with Subaru, and take a bath together?”

“T-That’s...It would greatly disrupt the morals of this residence...”
Masamune muttered, fumbling over her own words.

I guess she must be feeling like a health education teacher right about now. With how little progress she’s making, there won’t be any class soon.

“Move, Newcomer.”

“I-Ichigo-san?”

Ichigo-san pushed Masamune aside, and stepped in front of Suzutsuki. Ohhh, is she going to negotiate now?! Or, maybe she came up with a way to satisfy Suzutsuki. That’s an adult for you, she’s even older than the current Suzutsuki.

“Kanade-ojousama.” Ichigo-san spoke up with a serious tone.

Just what is she thinking? All of us present simply waited for her next words.

“Rather than with Subaru, how about the two of us sleep together?”

“.....”

...I forgot. Ichigo-san LOVES Suzutsuki after all. She probably wants to use this chance to do all sorts of things she normally can’t, right?

“Ehhhhh, not with Ichigo.”

“Wha...”

However, her desperate approach was denied a solid two seconds later. Despite looking like she was about to fall to the ground in despair, she barely kept herself standing to ask for the reason.

“W-Why?”

“Because you’re a bit scary, Ichigo.”

“...!?”

“And, you’re already a grandma.”

“I am still 29 years old!”

“But, you’re much older than me.”

“Urk...Y-YES, however...”

“And, you probably were planning on acting asleep, taking off my clothes, right?”

“Wha...”

“I knew it. You never change, Ichigo. Do you like naked girls that much?”

“N-NO. I don’t particularly like naked bodies, I just...”

Apparently she couldn’t just say ‘The only naked girl I like is Kanade-ojousama!’ right in front of her, so Ichigo-san could only grow quiet. It seems like she has felt LOVE towards Suzutsuki ever since she was a child. That’s the yandere maid for you. However, even if she may be a child on the inside, she still is a grown up high school girl on the outside, so letting her sleep alone would be best, right...



“I decided.”

Right as I was thinking that, Suzutsuki turned towards me.

“Odd Jobs-san, let’s sleep together.”

“.....”

It didn't even take a second for my back muscles to freeze up. I felt fierce gazes stabbing right into my back—Ahhh, I'm too scared to turn around! It has to be the three maids and one butler! They all have enough killing intent to end me with just their gazes.

"Y-Young lady, please stop joking about that."

"Why?"

"If we don't take back those words, my life...wait no, you're just a child, right? A child shouldn't sleep with an adult."

"Really?"

"Yes."

Even I myself knew that my logic was messed up. Does that mean that adults can sleep together at any time? Of course not. But, this is the best I could come up with, so let's all keep this country's laws in mind!

"Hmpf. Boring. I'm an adult, you know? Don't you understand that by simply looking at me?"

"I mean, you look like an adult, yes..."

"Right? Just look at this chest of mine."

"Stop! Don't try to shove my hand onto your breasts!"

"Then, which place would you prefer?"

"No place at all! Anyway, I don't plan on sleeping together with a child!"

"And I'm saying that I'm not a child."

"...Fine, then tell me your name, with no mispronunciation."

"Eh..."

"Come on, hurry up."

“Uuuu...O-Okay.” Like she had made up her mind, Suzutsuki took a deep breath, and opened her mouth. “...Suzuchuki Kanade.”

“Suzuchuki?”

“O-One more time! Suzuchuki...Huh?”

“What’s wrong? Can’t even say your own name right? You really are just a child.”

“~~~!”

“What a shame. I might have decided to sleep with you if you weren’t a child, but you still are.”

“~~~!” Young Suzutsuki started tearing up.

She looks as adorable as a kitty that had its food taken from it, but I can’t be spoiling her now. As long as I can just satisfy Suzutsuki with this...

“...Change of plans.”

“Huh?”

“Did you not hear me? It’ll be a change of plans. Just as you said, I may be a child, so I’ll be fighting like a child would.” Suzutsuki looked up at me, like a kitty asking for attention, and spoke up with a sweet voice... “——Onii-chan~”

“.....!”

This is bad, she really went that far, this small brat.

“Hey, Onii-chan! Let’s snuggle up together in the same bed?”

“.....!?”

Uwaaaaaah, stop! This gap is too much! She feels like a child, but looks like the usual Suzutsuki, so the gap is making her look more adorable! This is much more dangerous than her previous ‘hic!’ incident! I knew it, Suzutsuki was always a small devil!

“Ugh...!”

It's Derechuki-san. For now, I'll call her this way. It's her final form, not Deretsuki, not Yamitsuki, but Derechuki-san. Are you from Ma*ross, or Frie*a-sama by any chance? Just how many times can she transform? Derechuki-san is no joke, seriously...

“Onii-chan...”

“~~~!”

N-No, my ability to reason is slowly breaking apart. However, if I agree here and now, I'll forever be labeled as a lolicon. Farewell my normal life, and welcome to the abnormal. I'm about to open a forbidden door. I need to avoid this at any costs...!

“—I understand.”

This is war after all. The second I decided to fight against my fate, and attempted to rebel, an alto voice interrupted our conversation.

“Young lady, I think you should be sleeping with Jirou tonight.”

“Eh!? Really!?”

“Yes, that is what I judge.”

“Yay! Thanks, Subaru!”

“H-Hey, Konoe!?”

I was the one rebelling against the decision made by Konoe, to the joy of Suzutsuki. Is this butler planning on socially killing me and throwing me out of this place? Sleeping next to a girl that's barely 8 years old is a crime, you know that right.

“That's right, Subaru-sama! How could you allow such a thing!?”

Masamune must have agreed with my feelings, as she joined my team to oppose this decision. Yeah, go tell her, nasty rabbit. We're friends, so I'm happy to have you on my side...

“It’s the stupid chicken, remember!?! He may be a chicken bastard, but there’s no guarantee that he’s no lolicon!”

“.....”

“Oh yeah, Nii-san, you sometimes look at me with a lewd gaze in your eyes, I feel like.”

“.....”

“Kanade-ojousama, give me five seconds, I can finish my operation. I can make sure to remove his dangerous part so that you can sleep together with him without having to fear anything.”

“.....”

Um, it really hurts that you have virtually no faith in me, okay? Rather than receiving any support, I feel like you’re going to stab me in the back. Also, Ichigo-san, what do you mean by surgery? Where? Are you planning on modifying me?

“It’s fine.” Ignoring all possible reactions, Konoe simply nodded.

“Seriously, what are you thinking?”

She’s not going to drug me, right? She’s not the yandere maid, but with everything they have at this place, I wouldn’t be surprised if they imprisoned me underground.

“Basically, it would be a problem if the young lady and Jirou slept together, right? If so...”

For some reason, Konoe was blushing furiously, and after a solid three seconds, we found out why that was the case.

“I just...have to sleep with you two.”

♀ × ♂

“Waaaah, so fluffy!” Suzutsuki seemed in a great mood, as she jumped onto her own bed in her room. Not to mention with a momentum where she could turn the bed into a V shape.

Her room is about double the size of my own room, and it has a really luxurious bed. Hm...such a burgeiouse feeling, really...Wait, this isn't the time to be admiring this.



“Konoe, are we seriously going to sleep together?”

“O-Of course. That is the only method I could come up with in order to satisfy the young lady. Not to mention...”

“Not to mention?”

“When I watch over you, I can sleep in peace the best.”

“.....”

Nobody really trusts me, huh. I mean, I am a boy in the middle of my adolescence, so I can't blame them. Worst of all is that the three maids were fine with it as long as Konoe slept with us. That's the Butler-kun for you, her evaluation is unparalleled. If she participated in the elections of the prefecture, she would get a lot of votes.

“Oh yeah, you still have these pajamas?”

“W-What else am I supposed to do!? Everything else is in the laundry!” Konoe let out a sigh.

She wore the same pajama with a cat pattern on it, but with a different color. By the way, I'm still wearing my costume, whereas Suzutsuki wore something like a frilly night dress. Does she not get stiff shoulders while wearing this?

“Alright~”

Together with an adorable voice, Suzutsuki was the first one to slip into bed. Because of the size of this bed, it could easily fill us three people, but...Waah, I'm so nervous. Then again, sleeping in the same bed with two girls might help my gynophobia...

“Ah, I forgot. I got some sleeping goods from Ichigo.”

“Sleeping goods?”

“Yes, Onii-chan. I heard that if you put this on, she'll sleep really well.”

“...Huh.” I closely inspected the item offered to me by Suzutsuki.

...Handcuffs. They were definitely real handcuffs, not just some random toy...I see, I see. So basically, Ichigo-san would be able to sleep comfortably if I put these on, huh. Still, this is quite the surprise. I feel like Ichigo-san has warmed up compared to before.

She's not making me drink some sleeping medicine this time...

"Also, I got one more item."

"What item?"

"It'll feel good if you use it."

"That's not something you should be using right now!"

"Um...Ah, found it."

"This is...a rope?"

"She said that it'll feel really good if you put it around your neck, and squeeze it tight."

"I feel like I won't ever wake up again, so no thank you."

"Fufu, then just this."

"Ah, hold on!"

Before I could stop her, Suzutsuki put the handcuffs around my wrists. Waaah, I seriously can't get out of this. Now I won't even be able to move my hands while I'm asleep.

"Alright, preparations are complete."

"...'Zat so. Then let me sleep already."

"Eh? Why? These weren't the preparations to sleep."

"Then what preparations were you talking about?"

"To play doctor."

"This feels more like a human experiment than anything!"

"But, that's what all the children nowadays play, right?"

"I mean, you're not wrong, but..."

“Then, let’s start. I am the sick person, and Onii-chan is the doctor.”

“I’m the doctor!?”

“My phrases will be ‘D-Doctor, you can’t...Not here...Ah, no...I told you no...Ah, Sensei’s big syringe is going into my...’, how does that sound?”

“That kind of doctor play is forbidden!”

“Ehhh, it sounds fun though!”

“It’s not fun at all. Also, where did you even hear these kinds of words?”

“Today at the hospital.”

“Seriously!?”

Is that hospital okay!? Are they using such aggressive treatment for their patients!?

“Ehehe, just kidding. Ichigo-san told me about this. She said that if you really tried anything like that, I should call for her right away.”

“.....”

That damn Yandere maid again. She probably is looking for any legal reason to get me arrested. What awful taste, really.

“Oh yeah, why were you that adamant on sleeping with me anyway, Suzutsuki?”

“What?” Suzutsuki looked at me in confusion. “Hmmm...” She thought about it for a bit. “You know, I always wanted a puppy!”

“Huh?”

“And, it was my dream to sleep with a puppy.”

“.....”

All my doubts were dispelled. She just sees me as a puppy because of

the costume I'm wearing.

"Onii-chan, paw."

"Can't do that with my handcuffs on."

"Then, a moonsault."

"I don't have the acrobatic talent to do that!"

"Sheesh, if you stay this selfish, then Ichigo will do a shurgery on you."

"Surgery?"

"A castration shursheshi."

"Do you even understand what you're saying!?"

"Ichigo said that with this shursheshi, Onii-chan will laugh as well."

"I definitely won't be smiling, I can guarantee that."

"What are you talking about? Your knees will."

"...Knees?"

"They'll be shaking in laughter because of the fear, she said."

"She sure says some scary stuff!"

"Ehehehe, castration, castration!"

"I'm begging you, stop chanting that over and over!"

My knees are seriously going to burst out laughing. Still, she really is having a lot of fun, huh. Maybe she's happy because her dream of sleeping with a puppy was granted? To me, it really is just a nightmare.

"Come on, let's sleep, Onii-chan!"

"Woah, calm down!"

She forcefully pulled me into the bed. Eeeek, I can't fully move because of the handcuffs. Not to mention that the second I fell down, Suzutsuki clung to meeeee!?

"Y-Young lady, you shouldn't cling to him that much."

"Why?"

"B-Because...Jirou is a boy, and..."

"What's the big problem? More importantly, why don't you join us, Subaru?"

".....Yes." Konoe seemed flustered, but entered the bed.

Of course, she wasn't clinging to me like Suzutsuki did. She really wasn't, but...

".....!"

I could pick up a sweet scent right next to me. It was undoubtedly the scent of a girl.

"Urk....."

This is seriously bad. I should go to sleep quickly. Staying next to two girls like this is just bad for my heart. Can someone just put an AED on me to make sure?

"W-What's wrong, Jirou? Can't sleep?"

"Y-Yeah, well..."

Konoe must have been nervous as well, as she fumbled over her own words. Must be an after-effect of the kiss, or it might just be us sleeping next to each other. Only an alien would be able to stay calm in this situation.

"Funya..."

Yet, not knowing about how we felt, Suzutsuki was yawning like a child. Alright, just fall asleep now. And then, stop using me as a

hugging pillow.

“Hey, Onii-chan, count sheep for me.”

“I don’t mind, but that sure is childish.”

“I am a child.”

“...Alright. I’m counting them. One sheep, two sheep, three...”

“Zzzz...”

“So fast!?”

I barely counted two and a half sheep. She sure knows how to fall asleep quickly. Is that just so much of an effective method? By the way, if I count sheep, I can’t sleep at all. The face of that Silent Sheep just fills my head, so it makes me feel like I’m counting murderers instead of sheep. Because of that, I can’t fall asleep at all. Urk, I need to hurry up and fall asleep myself.

Because she had fallen asleep, Suzutsuki’s grasp on me had weakened, which is why my gynophobia symptoms have calmed down. This is my chance, now I can fall asleep. Right as I wanted to close my eyes...

“...Jirou.” A faint alto voice reached my ears.

I tried to turn over my head, but...I failed. Because Konoe was so close to me, and also because of the kiss that happened the day prior, I couldn’t move at all. Gaaah, why do I still remember it so vividly? That scenery was immediately added to my internal library, playing on repeat despite me hating it. I feel like I’m about to depart to heaven the ideal way.

“W-What?” I asked, while looking up at the ceiling.

In response, Konoe also gave an embarrassed ‘W-Well’.

“Jirou, why do you think the young lady turned back into a child?”

“Why...?” I subconsciously glanced at Suzutsuki sleeping next to me.

There, I found the familiar face of the rich lady I knew all too well. On the outside, she hasn't changed at all, and yet she now is a young 8-year-old girl on the inside.

"Maybe...what she was troubled about acted as the trigger?" Konoe muttered with a distressed voice. "Ichigo said it as well, right? That the young lady was worrying about something recently. Maybe the stress she built up led to this..."

"....."

That does sound possible. Ichigo-san emphasized this after all. And—I'm related to this.

"Hey, Jirou..." Her voice was quivering ever so slightly, as she lined up her words. "Maybe what Kureha-chan said, that the young lady actually..."

There, Konoe was interrupted.

"Mm...what? Were you calling for me?"

"Y-Young lady, did I wake you up?"

Right as Konoe was about to finish her sentence, Suzutuski seemed to have woken up, as she let out another yawn.

"Huh? Onii-chan, you're still awake?"

"W-Well, yeah."

"Can't sleep?"

"Y-Yup."

"Hmm..." She seemed to be thinking about something, and continued with a 'Ah, I know'. "If you can't sleep, then I'll give you a charm."

"A charm?"

"That's right, a wonderful charm." She said, and smiled. "—I'll give you a kiss."

I couldn't even bring out my usual 'Wha?', as only my mouth opened in shock.

"A goodnight kiss. Did your mother never give you one?" Suzutsuki sounded confused.

I mean, I did get a good night piledriver before, but a goodnight kiss was never a practice in my family.

"Onii-chan, turn over here."

"...!?"

She grabbed my face, and forcefully turned it towards her, holding me still. Waaah, so close! I could feel her breath on my face...

"Onii-chan..." She spoke up with a gentle voice.

Derechuki-san slowly approached my lips with hers, and—

"Y-You can't, young lady!"

With a few millimeters between us, dear Butler-kun stopped us.

"Why? It's just a goodnight kiss."

"A-Anyway! You can't! You have to keep the kiss for another time."

"Ehhh? Then, why don't you do it?"

"Wha...!?"

"It's just a kiss. A goodnight kiss."

"~~~!" Konoe groaned in embarrassment.

A few seconds of silence followed, when Konoe suddenly whispered 'I-I understand...', looking at me.

"...Jirou." She grabbed my head, turning my face towards her this time.

As a result of that, I could see her face up close to me, as well as her

antique doll facial features.

“K-Konoe, calm down!”

Gyaaaa, please don't! I definitely won't be able to sleep! This is probably more effective than any coffee or energy drink. It's like I'm taking in raw caffeine. Even though I barely got over the kiss from last night.

“Jirou, don't worry.” However, Subaru-sama was unexpectedly calm about this. “Young lady, I came up with an even better method.”

“Eh? Really? Let's do that then.”

“Understood.” After receiving permission from Suzutsuki, Konoe let out a faint ‘Sorry, Jirou’.

...Don't tell me...

“~~~!”

Just as I had feared, Konoe suddenly clung to me like her life depended on it. She even pressed my face deep inside her chest.

“Y-You!”

I knew it, she's trying to make me pass out because of my gynophobia! How forceful...Not to mention that my gynophobia's symptoms were already flaring up because of Suzutsuki's previous hug. In an instant, my consciousness was starting to fade.

“...!”

Not to mention this sensation! Because I was hugged so tightly, I was pushed into the soft marshmallow zone that was Konoe's chest! Ahh, they're right on my face! Not to mention without a br—Gaaaaah!

“...Ahh...”

As my consciousness was drifting away, I had but a single thought in my mind—I'll probably have some sweet dreams tonight.

1 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Masanori_Hata

2 In the original it's Doki = Earthenware/pottery, and then she says 'My heart goes doki doki' (Kill me)

Chapter 3: Suzutsuki Residence OF THE DEAD

In the end, I think that the most important thing for a human being is to eat breakfast. In order to have a fulfilling life and have energy for the day, you can't miss out on a morning dish. As I am Japanese, I have my own menu, with miso soup, grilled fish, and scrambled eggs being the best. As for the drinks, milk is awesome, it fits unexpectedly well.

Another important factor is that you eat breakfast with other people. When eating alone, you tend to lose the taste of how delicious the breakfast really is, so being with someone else makes it much more delicious, and enjoyable. It sounds like the wishes of a guy in his thirties, but I chose to believe that it's like that, and live my life accordingly. However, I even think that something is wrong with these members here.

“Wah, Ichigo. So we're having scrambled eggs for breakfast today!”

“YES, it's Kanade-ojousama's favorite.”

“Thank you, it looks very delicious.”

“Kanade-ojousama, please keep your manners in mind.”

“I know that. Thanks for the food...Hm? Onii-chan, aren't you going to eat?”

“N-No, I will...Thanks for the food...”

Urged by Suzutsuki, I put my hands together...or rather, my paws in my costume. The rule of this family states that servants and master eat together, so we all sit around the table with Suzutsuki. Since I only got microwave rice and pickled radish until yesterday, this was a newfound joy in life.

By the way, we have no school today. Once a year, the school

celebrates its opening day, so there were no classes for today, which makes me very happy. If there was one problem...

“What’s wrong, you’re sounding a bit down...Am I heavy?”

“N-No, of course not.” I tried my best to let out a vague smile, but I couldn’t stop sweating profusely.

Right now, my job is to be a chair for Suzutsuki Kanade. I was a simple human chair.

“.....”

No, she’s not sitting on me as I was on all fours, or anything like that. She simply sat on my lap. I feel like a father spoiling his daughter. However, because Suzutsuki has the body of a high school girl, it just doesn’t feel right. Honestly speaking, I was too busy trying to endure my gynophobia that I don’t even know what it tastes like, let alone that I can barely eat anyway.

“Hmpf...”

Next to me, Konoe showed a complicated expression. Add Masamune to that as well. Even though we finally got together for some breakfast, the two were just staring at me, not even touching their food.

“Onii-chan. Here, open wide~”

Yet, Suzutsuki had no awareness of this tense atmosphere, as she offered me a croissant. Today’s menu was salad, scrambled eggs, freshly baked croissants, and some hot bacon. Bravo, is all I can say.

“You’re not going to eat anything?”

“No, I’m fine. I can eat on my own.”

“Even though it’s your master’s order?”

“That...”

“Don’t worry, there’s no poison in there.” Derechuki-san showed an

angelic smile.

Judging from that attitude, she's gotten quite attached to me. However, that doesn't mean I could just ignore Ichigo-san, who glared at me from the opposite side of the table. The way she's shaking with a knife in hand is terrifying to say the least. I feel like I might be turned into chicken saute if I'm not careful.

"Come on, Onii-chan."

"Urk..."

Without knowing what I felt, Suzutsuki pushed the fork towards me. Can you not? You'll be the end of me at this rate. Also, this is an indirect kiss, right? Even if her consciousness is that of a child right now, this is bad for my heart. I feel like she might ask for money after that.

"Onii-chan, eat up?" She spoke with a sweet voice.

...Damn it, this isn't fair. She actually looks like an innocent child right now. Ahh, Derechuki-san seriously is no joke. Why does she have to grow up like that? If she just kept this personality, she'd be so cute...

"Stupid chicken, you're grinning." Because of a sharp voice, I was called back to reality.

Looking over, Masamune gave me a disgruntled and sharp gaze, as she cut up some of her bacon with a knife and fork.

"Lolicon. I didn't expect you to have this kind of interest."

"Y-You're wrong, this is just Suzutsuki and..."

"Aren't you pretty close now. You even slept in the same bed yesterday, right?"

"Didn't I just explain everything? Nothing happened. Also, why are you so pissed?"

"Am not. Not at all. I just...don't want my friend to be a lolicon,

that's all. There's no other reason besides that." She said, and munched up the bacon.

Well, I don't want to be regarded as a lolicon. But, I feel like the universe is tempting me recently, with Schrö-senpai and Derechukisan. I need to make sure I don't lose myself.

"Oh, that's right. Suzutsuki Kanade, I made something good for you." As the breakfast had progressed further, Masamune suddenly spoke up.

"Eh? Something good?"

"A kamishibai¹."

"Ohh, that's pretty cool, Usamin."

"Would you like to take a look?"

"Yup!" Suzutsuki energetically responded as she sat on my lap.

A kamishibai...now that's quite old-school. But, why now? We're eating.

"Here, let's start then." Masamune took out drawn pictures from beneath her chair, and the title on the first one was... "The title is 'Hammer-kun and Long Nail-chan'."

"....."

Um, Masamune-san, I feel like this title will negatively influence her education.

"I'll give you a simple explanation of the story. It's a success story of Hammer-kun and Long Nail-chan, who fight their common enemy, the Lolicon Straw Doll."

"Waaaah, it really is a straw doll! But, it looks a bit weird. It resembles someone I know. Onii-chan, do you know who that could be?"

"N-No idea." I gave a vague response.

After all, that Lolicon Straw Doll looks exactly like me. It was in a more comic style because it was drawn, but it was wearing glasses, and on its chest, it said 'Chicken Bastard'.

"Hey, Masamune, are you bullying me now?"

"Of course not. They often do this in grade school, right? This is just another type of education. The whole 'You shouldn't talk to strangers' thing, remember."

"But why did I turn into the enemy!?"

"With Hammer-kun and Long Nail-chan's special combined attack 'Cursing Ritual', the Lolicon Straw Doll will forever suffer in hell."

"Stop with that ominous naming!"

My chest actually started to hurt now. Her naming sense is the worst. Imagine fighting against the Silent Sheep.

"...I see, if you dislike it that much, I'll stop."

"Eh...?"

Surprisingly enough, Masamune put away the pictures. Ahh, thank god. I really don't want to see a character based on me being beat up...

"Then, let's move on to the second project. 'Hammer-kun and Long Nail-chan 3D'."

"3D!?"

"This is the enemy character Lolicon Straw Doll."

"Ohhh! Amazing! It's in 3D! I can see it standing there...Wait hold on! That's just a normal straw doll, right!?" I threw in a retort.

What do you mean 3D? She just took out an actual straw doll from beneath her chair.

"Also, where did you even get the straw from?"

“It’s natto.”

“Natto!?”

“I used the one we had here. Though, I had to eat the natto for that.”

“You clearly didn’t have to go that far!”

“I really hate natto...”

“What a cute weakness that is!”

“D-Don’t blame me! Also, what!? Do you want to see my body slimy and sticky from it!? How much of a pervert are you!?”

“You’re the pervert here!”

How did you even come up with that? Also, why did you force yourself to eat it? Is your hate for me stronger than that?

“I tried really hard...I thought that, if I made that doll, it might scare Suzutsuki Kanade...and then, she would hopefully back down a bit...”

“.....”

I see, so her target was Derechuki-san. I guess it would be rare for children to like straw dolls, but did that plan work out...?

“However, leaving this to waste would be such a shame, so I’ll be using this straw doll for a real curse ritual.”

“Waaaah, it’s the climax!”

“Stop that already! That’s not something you should show to a child!”

“Shut up, stupid chicken. If you cause any more of a ruckus, I’ll make sure your life reaches its climax as well.”

“Don’t say scary stuff like that! Damn it, now that’s come to this...!”

“Ah, hey! What are you doing!?”

I forcefully stole the straw doll from Masamune, who sat next to me. Like hell I'd accept being cursed here. This definitely doesn't count for education.

"Geez, I worked on this an entire night..."

"You could have just, you know, slept?"

"That is also...your fault..." Masamune puffed out her lips, and started complaining.

Why would that be my fault? I'm not a lolicon, and the reason I slept in the same bed as Suzutsuki is because she ordered me to.

"But, it's fine. I still have other straw dolls."

"What the hell is this?!"

"Look, so many."

Masamune said, and took out a cardboard box filled with straw dolls from beneath her chair, and...Waaaaaaaaaaaaah!? How many is that!? It's like a small army!

"And? Shocked, right?"

"Of course!?"

"If only your heart could just stop like that."

"You are asking for it!?"

"Ah, Newcomer, give me one as well."

"What do you plan on doing with that, Ichigo-san!?"

"Just trying to relieve some of my stress. But, I don't need a hammer. I have this after all."

"Don't bring out a chainsaw at the dining table!"

Without a moment's hesitation, Masamune silently handed Ichigo-san a straw doll. These two are dangerous. She seems to hold a grudge

against me because I slept in the same bed as Suzutsuki. She's emitting clear hostility. Damn it, I really need an ally now.

"Kureha, can you say something to them?"

"Eh? Me?"

"Yeah. You're my little sister, so you should know, right?"

"...Yeah, I do." Kureha nodded strongly.

That's right, she's my blood-related younger sister. Usually she just uses me as a punching bag, but I have to count on her during times like these...

"Usamin-senpai, give me one as well."

"Kureha-san!?"

"Nii-san, I'm worried about you, okay? This is just to prevent you becoming a lolicon."

"The way you worry is messed up, you hear me!?"

"Then, should I try some wrestling moves instead?"

"Do you want me to suffer that badly!?"

Come on now, I don't want to indirectly feel you pulling wrestling moves on that straw doll. Also, how will that even stop me from being a lolicon? If it had that kind of ability, it would have won the Nobel Prize by now.

"Onii-chan, they really are close, huh."

I don't know if she even knew what was going on, but the young lady said these words with appreciation in her tone. I however wholeheartedly agreed. It's crazy that all of those maids were emitting full-blown hostility. I feel like the sole survivor in a zombie movie. Around me are only enemies. If I were to give this situation a title, it would be 'Suzutsuki Residence OF THE DEAD'.

“Damn it...”

I looked towards Konoe, since she was the only person who hadn't turned into a zombie yet—But the second our eyes met, she immediately averted her gaze in embarrassment. What a blunt attitude. Worse of all is that she's been like this the moment I woke up. It appears as if she didn't want to talk with me because of what happened yesterday. I still haven't properly apologized for the incident with the kiss...Can't we just make up already...

“Thanks for the food. Now, everyone, I'm counting on you today again.”

Eventually, the breakfast ended, and us servants had our respective jobs to fulfill. Then again, my job today was to simply do some cleaning, and I know it can't be helped with how big this residence is.

“Let's go, Ichigo.”

“Understood. Subaru, the preparations?”

“All done.”

Suzutsuki, Ichigo-san, and Konoe got up from their seats, and left the room. Oh yeah, she had another check-up in the hospital, right. This time they're apparently leaving for a hospital outside of town. They're probably trying everything they can to deal with Suzutsuki's sudden memory loss.

“Stupid chicken, you get to working already.” While saying so, Masamune carried the dishes to the kitchen.

Her job is to clean dishes and make lunch for later. Since she's skilled at housework, it was an easy feat.

“...Alright, time to get to work.” I whispered briefly, and motivated myself.

Normally I should be thinking about possible ways to cure Suzutsuki, but...In my current situation, there's not much I can do, so I should probably just get some work done at least. After all, I'm a servant at this residence right now. I may not have the most important role, but

I at least have to properly fulfill that.

“Nii-san.”

Right as I was thinking that, Kureha disrupted my thoughts.

“What’s up? If you want to try some wrestling moves, let’s do that later.”

Since I woke up next to Konoe, she probably held back on waking me up as always. It’s been a while since I had such a peaceful morning. Couldn’t expect anything like that in the hellish home I live in.

“No, there’s something I wanted to talk with you about.”

“Oh, really?”

“Remember how I said that Onee-sama might have feelings for you? The thing is...I actually had a proper reason for that.”

“Reason...it wasn’t just your intuition...?”

“Y-Yeah...Um, it’s about this!” Kureha seemed oddly flustered, as she took out a pink envelope from her pocket. Written on there was ‘To Jirou-kun’...



“.....”

C-Calm down. Is this...what I think it is?

“Right? No matter how you look at it, this is a love letter.” Kureha muttered, as she blushed even more furiously.

I mean, she’s definitely not wrong. I’m looking at a love letter. It even

has a heart symbol on it. But...

“Kureha, when was this given to you?”

“Um...yesterday morning? She wanted me to give this to you this morning, so she gave it to me.”

“.....”

...Suspicious. That rich lady supposedly wrote a love letter? She never had such a girly character, oi. I'd rather believe it if this was a scam, or a bomb that went off the second I opened it. Not to mention this timing. Why was there any need to hand it over today?

“A-Anway! I have my own job now, so I'll see you later, Nii-san! Open it later!” Kureha's face was still beet red, as she ran out of the room.

Was she that embarrassed? It's like that letter was directed at her.

“Hmm...”

Now, what should I do about this? If I had to guess, that's probably a fake love letter. I've been plagued by her for half a year, and had my gynophobia used against me, so I am more cautious now.

“Maybe...this might be related to this whole memory incident?”

She got this letter yesterday morning. That was still when Suzutsuki had her memories. Maybe this letter has something important written inside of it?

“.....”

Change of plans, I'll read this letter right now. Work can be done later. Maybe I might find a hint to fix this whole mess in there. If I can cure her, she won't be as clingy to me anymore, and I'll be freed from this Suzutsuki Residence OF THE DEAD nonsense.

“...Alright.”

Now that has been decided, it's time to get reading. Bringing it to my

room is probably the best way. There, I can be alone, and carefully read through everything...

“...Jirou.”

Right as I wanted to leave the room, Konoe was there. Huh? That’s weird, shouldn’t she have left?

“D-Don’t give me such a weird look. I just sent off the young lady. My job today is to stay in the residence.” She must have been feeling quite awkward, because she explained this with her gaze averted.

Ahhh, I see. So since the old man is gone, and Ichigo-san has to take care of Suzutsuki, there’s no need for Konoe to leave as well.

“More than anything...I saw Kureha-chan practically running away just now, did something happen?”

“Eh...”

“Not to mention that she held an adorable envelope in her hands...” The Butler-kun’s gaze focused on the fake love letter in my hands.

.....Yeah, I can’t hide this. I feel like it would be better to read this together with Konoe. This might help us get along better again.

“...Ahh, the thing is, this is a love letter.”

“L-Love letter!?”

“Why are you so shocked?”

“B-Because...! Don’t tell me, did Kureha-chan...!” Butler-kun was whispering to himself.

...This is bad, she’s having a grave misunderstanding right now. Not to mention that I forgot to tell her it’s a fake love letter.

“I’ve underestimated you! To think you and Kureha-chan had that kind of relationship!”

“C-Calm down, this is something Suzutsuki...”

“Yes, I’m sure that the young lady will be disappointed as well!”

“No, that’s not what I meant.”

“What did you mean then!? I won’t accept this! A forbidden love between siblings, I can’t...!”

“Don’t worry, that’s not what this is.”

“You’re not siblings!? Are you not related by blood!?”

“What kind of gal game setting is that?”

Of course, looking at Kureha like a romantic interest is absolutely impossible. If anything, I can barely see her as a homo sapien. She seems more like a carnivorous beast. It’s like my home is my own small Jurassic Park.

“Damn it, little sisters really are not fair...maybe I should move on to method 7 of the manual, ‘Act as his step-sister’...!?” Butler-kun groaned to herself.

Please, won’t you just calm down. I don’t even get what you’re talking about.

“You’ve been under the wrong impression this entire time. This letter ain’t from Kureha.”

“Eh? But, she gave it to you, right?”

“She was just the middleman.”

“...Then, who?”

“Suzutsuki.”

When I gave an honest answer, Konoe looked like she got hit by a cross counter, and staggered backwards. Following that, she started stuttering like a broken recorder, just going ‘Wha...wha...wha’ the entire time. Don’t tell me, did she get another wrong idea?

“I-I see...So it really was like that...”

“Konoe?”

“Just what have I done...I haven’t realized this entire time...”

“Um, Konoe-san?”

“What should I do...what should I do from now on...”

“.....”

No good, she’s not listening to me anymore. Can’t help it, I should just check the contents and prove it to her that way—that this is just a fake love letter, naturally.

“Ah, Jirou! What are you doing!?”

However, right as I wanted to open the envelope, Konoe frantically stopped me. I mean, what do you think I’m doing?

“I was thinking you could join me reading it.”

“L-L-L-Like hell I can! You should read this on your own!”

“But...”

“I don’t have any right to look at that!”

“It’s fine, I’m telling you. I’m opening it up now.”

“Ah, you can’t...!” Konoe frantically hid her eyes, and still looked at the envelope through the gaps between her fingers.

Seems like she’s curious either way. At the same time, I continued to open up the envelope. Inside was a single piece of paper.

“...No turning back, okay?”

“...Y-Yeah.” Butler-kun nodded, tension filling her voice.

Slowly, I opened up the folded paper, and was greeted by girly handwriting...

♀ × ♂

“Jirou, are we really going inside?”

“We got no other option, that’s what it said in the letter.”

“But, just entering the young lady’s room is...”

We stood in the hallway of the Suzutsuki Residence, in front of a single door, where Konoe spoke up with a worried voice.

Open up the drawer of my desk.

Those were the words written on the letter, the words that came from Suzutsuki herself. Naturally, this was Suzutsuki’s room, which had the desk we were looking for. That being the case, we judged it would be our best bet to just check it out.

“Let’s go.”

“Y-Yeah...”

I slowly opened the door. Since I slept in here yesterday, I had already gotten used to it. Um, her desk should be...Ah, found it. It was an antique desk, standing in the corner of her room.

“Is this it?”

I confirmed the text in the letter one more time. As expected, it was telling us to open up the drawer, but...

“Which one?” Konoe was lost in her thoughts.

That’s right, there’s three possible drawers to open. All of them are in order, so one of them should be bingo, but wildly guessing is...

“For now, let’s open up the one furthest above.”

“...Alright. My deepest apologies, young lady.” Konoe must have felt guilty, as she apologized towards her master that wasn’t even present.

And then, she silently put her hand on the drawer. Here, we might find a hint on how to cure Suzutsuki’s memory loss. Just by thinking

about that, I felt nervous.

“...Here I go.” The alto voice spoke up, and I responded with a confident ‘Yeah’.

There, Konoe opened up the first drawer—which was filled with a great amount of underwear, filling the drawer to the brim.

“Uwaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah don’t loooooook!”

“Guha!?”

Immediately after, an impact shook my body. A butler knuckle fired from Konoe’s golden left beautifully slammed into my cranium.

“Y-You, what was that for!?”

“Shut up! You shouldn’t be looking at something like that!”

“Something like that...”

“I said don’t look!” Butler-kun hid the underwear like she was a mother bird protecting its children.

That’s too late, even now. I already saved HD pictures of that scene in my head. Most of the designs of her underwear were quite mature. They even had ornaments and frills on them...Ahh, how lewd. It resembled a flower garden I was innocently gazing upon...Wait, this isn’t the time for that. More importantly, why does she have underwear in her drawer? Normally, you’d put them into the dresser, right?

“...Hm, this is...”

As I was lost in thought, Konoe seemingly found something. It looked like a small memo she took out from between the underwear. There, it said...

“‘What a shame, you missed’...”

“.....”

That's Devil Suzutsuki for you, she knows to make every little thing a prank. I didn't think she would set up a trap right here. However, I shall forgive her this once. For a high school boy like me, seeing a girl's underwear like that is like finding a mine of gold, so I take it.

"N-Next one! We need to find the correct one quickly!"

Konoe seemed to have taken some damage from that at least, as she quickly put her hand on the next drawer...You won't get me again, Suzutsuki. What will it be this time? A demon? A snake? It probably won't be underwear again, but we should probably be careful. Being surprised again will give me a heart attack. Once again, Konoe did the honors, and what greeted us was...

"This is...a DVD?"

Indeed, it was a DVD. A disk was left in a plastic box. Next to that was a memo, which said 'Correct'. Guess we hit bullseye now.

"But, why a DVD..."

"She's probably telling us to watch this? Luckily, this room has a TV and recorder."

Basically, this is a video message. To think she put two layers into this.

"Let's watch it. Maybe there's some hint there that could help us turn Suzutsuki back to normal."

"...Yeah."

Konoe must have been nervous, or because of the kiss the other day, because she still kept an awkward attitude towards me. I put the DVD into the TV deck we had at our disposal inside the room. Luckily, it was a similar one I had at home, so I had no problems setting it up. Though, the actual size of the TV severely beats ours at home. Now I only have to press the play button.

"...Phew." I took a deep breath in order to calm myself.

I glanced over at Konoe, and she gave me a nod. Feeling my

heartbeat accelerate, I pressed the button to play the DVD—

‘Hello there, Jirou-kun. The fact that you’re watching this video means that the love letter reached you.’

What greeted us was a dignified voice, and reflected on the screen was undoubtedly—Suzutsuki Kanade. It was the Suzutsuki before she had lost her memories.

“Young lady...!” Being able to hear her beloved master’s real voice, Konoe started tearing up.

By the way, I was about to cry as well, but for a different reason. Reality truly is cruel. After all, that innocent and cute Derechuki-san would eventually grow up to become someone like her. If only she stayed like that, she would have skipped the whole Yamitsuki-san development, and become a prim and proper young lady. Just, why...

‘Jirou-kun, are you thinking about anything rude by any chance?’

“!?” Hearing the Suzutsuki on the screen throw in a retort, I froze up in shock.

She really is no joke, that Suzutsuki Kanade. Her instincts greatly cross anything you’d expect from an average human. To think she’d throw a retort at me from the past.

‘Well, it’s fine. This isn’t the first time you think something rude about me.’

“Mind your own business.”

‘By the way, did you open up the lowest drawer?’

“Sure didn’t. This DVD was in the second one after all.”

‘If you did, then what a shame. It has a very private picture of Subaru in it.’

“Wha!?”

‘It’s a picture I took before when we cosplayed together.’ Suzutsuki

showed an enjoyable smile.

Damn it, so that was the real win? To think she put a rare item in there...

“Jirou, why are you talking with a TV screen...?” Konoe sounded a bit grossed out.

I’m surprised myself. It’s probably because of the retort Suzutsuki threw at me. What a wasted talent that is.

‘...Anyway.’ Suzutsuki let out a sigh. ‘Let’s leave the wasted talk for later. We should focus on the main problem.’ Through the screen, Suzutsuki looked at us, with a determined gaze.

A tense air filled the room. Finally, the girl opened her lips to break through the silence.

‘If the me with you is perfectly sane and the same as always, I will give you ten seconds to turn off this video. I don’t care if you just forget about the video either. However, if there is anything weird going on with me, keep playing this video.’

“.....!”

That sounded like a message directed directly at our situation...Yeah, I figured as much. Suzutsuki Kanade, she predicted the arrival of Derechuki-san. She most likely was pointing at her memory loss. In other words, she knows...that she would end up this way.

“...Jirou.” Konoe called out my name.

I know, the choice we should be taking here is...

‘Ten seconds passed.’ With a calm tone, Suzutsuki declared. ‘Since you didn’t stop this video, the me in the future...has gone crazy, right? This is just my guess, but my personality probably returned into one of a child.’

Yeah, that’s right. Her memories are obstructed. The Suzutsuki right now has turned into a young girl who is merely 8 years old. It’s like only her mind travelled in time. But, why did this...

‘Fine, I’ll explain everything to you.’ Suzutsuki opened her mouth. ‘If I had to guess, my memories of a child resurfaced, and took over my current personality. You most likely took me to the hospital to get it checked out, but they probably judged it as unclear. Yeah, there’s no way that the doctors could figure this out. After all...I myself chose to turn back to an 8-year old girl.’ Suzutsuki declared with no hesitation.

“Y-You chose this...” Konoe blinked in confusion in the face of her master’s words.

Of course, I felt the same. This made absolutely no sense. However, in order to fully grasp this situation, we had to listen to her explanation.

‘Everything started with—Usami-san. Didn’t you think it was weird? I declared her as my mortal enemy, and yet I made her a maid here at this residence.’

Yeah, I thought it was weird. We’re talking about Usami Masamune, the one girl who can see through Suzutsuki’s perpetual nonsense, being her natural enemy. Why would she bring her in as a servant...

‘Put simply—it was an experiment.’

“...Experiment?” I subconsciously returned a question to the Suzutsuki on the screen.

‘Basically, I wanted to see what I could do so that Usami-san won’t see through my lies and deception anymore. In other words, I was searching for countermeasures. For that, I had Usami-san become a servant here at our residence, and left her close to me.’

“.....”

I see. Now that I think about it, Suzutsuki wouldn’t just leave her natural enemy alone. Knowing her, she would do everything in her power to take care of that nuisance. If anything, thinking of some kind of countermeasure would probably be her most natural thought. But, how is that related to the erasure of her memories?

‘I had this plan for a while now. I was just trying to find the perfect

time and place to put it into action. And, the location just turned out to be my residence.'

"....."

'I've been giving it a lot of thought, you know? About what I could do so that that girl won't see through my lies again. After all of that...Jirou-kun, what do you think I came up with?'

"...Like hell I know."

Even though I knew it wouldn't reach her, I still gave my own answer. Yet, Suzutsuki smiled, almost as if she heard my response.

'Knowing you, Jirou-kun, you probably will say "I don't know". Fine, I'll tell you. The answer I came up with is—deceive even myself.' She explained with an oddly cold tone.

...Deceive herself? The hell's up with that? Makes no sense.

'If you think about it, the answer is simple. Why do you think Usami-san can see through my lies? It's because she can feel that I am lying. Whenever I lie, I act in a way so that nobody will realize this—but Usami-san is sensitive to that, and realizes what I'm doing.'

"....."

'That's why she catches on to my lies. Even if it's on the level where the average person falls for it, she feels this faint sense of discomfort. In order for me to remove this discomfort—I have to forget the very fact that I am lying at that given moment.'

"Wha..."

I tried my hardest to grasp the words I was just told. So basically... what? Let's say that this thing Suzutsuki does when she tells nonsense—is 'acting'. For example, when she attends school as an honor student, that's also 'acting'. It's 'acting' so that the people around her don't realize they are being lied to. Right now, her acting is perfect enough that nobody can see through it. However, Masamune feels that there is acting involved, reacts towards this discomfort, and caught on to the fact that Suzutsuki is lying.

However, if we assume that even Suzutsuki herself forgets that she is lying, then the whole ‘acting’ will disappear as well...

‘Do you understand it now? If Usami-san sees through my acting, I just have to avoid acting all-together. In order to stay natural, I need to forget that I am lying to myself. I need to believe that my lies are the truth. Like this, I deceive myself.

“.....”

That’s what it means to deceive even yourself. But, is that really achievable? Being able to even deceive yourself sounds more like a superpower.

‘Honestly speaking, I didn’t know if I could pull it off or not. That’s why I decided on this experiment.’

“.....”

‘If you are watching this video right now, I can guess the result already. And, Usami-san probably didn’t manage to see through my lies.’

“.....!”

That’s right, Masamune said it when she first saw Suzutsuki.

‘I can’t. Because...right now, Suzutsuki Kanade is not lying.’

Masamune stated that Suzutsuki was not lying. Suzutsuki herself believed that she wasn’t lying, didn’t do her usual ‘acting’, and thus Masamune couldn’t see through it. Basically, what she did was...

“Don’t tell me...you told yourself that you’re a young child, until you fully believed it?”

As I was left baffled, Konoe arrived at the conclusion herself. That’s probably the true secret behind this incident, and why she turned into a child. She never lost her memories, she chose to end up this way.

‘Did you understand it now? I made myself believe that I was just a

young child. I decided to put my plan into action whenever some kind of trouble would happen. My actual plan had me falling down the stairs, but how did it turn out?’ Suzutsuki tilted her head as she asked.

Sadly, she was off. According to Ichigo-san, Suzutsuki ended up like this because she collapsed, caused by her anemia. When she woke up in the hospital, she probably thought to herself—Good timing. With this, she didn’t have to fall down the stairs. She simply collapsed because of anemia. That was plenty of a trigger—the trigger to make us believe that she actually suffered from memory loss.

‘When it comes to the method where I could actively lie to myself, it’s a type of self-suggestion, or hypnosis, I guess. Either way, I succeeded in making myself believe that lie. And, that helped me win against Usami-san. That’s the contents and result of the experiment.’ She finished her explanation.

...Alright, I got the gist of it. But, there’s one thing I don’t understand. If She won against Masamune, why is she still a child right now?

‘However, since I am still a child right now, the experiment is a failure. In my plans, the premise was for the self-suggestion to have worn off by the time you receive the letter from Kureha-chan.’

“.....”

‘That’s how I originally set it up...that I would be normal again once I woke up the next morning. Until then I should have figured out that what I said was a lie...However...It ended up as a failure.’ She calmly announced, and let out a sigh. ‘That’s where you come in. This is what’s important.’ She spoke up, as if to brush away this heavy atmosphere.

...That’s right. We’re not done yet. What we want is a method to turn Suzutsuki back to normal.

‘—This is an order, Jirou-kun.’

I bet that not even Konoe could have imagined what was about to

happen. The start of everything was Suzutsuki's order.

'Turn me back to normal. That is your job as a servant. At this rate, if the worst case arrives, I might stay as a child forever. That's why, I want you to help cure me from this. Of course, I already came up with a method.'

"A method?"

'A method to return me back to normal—That is, to satisfy me. I think that, as long as the current me has any sorts of regrets, this probably won't be fixed. That's why, if you clear up these lingering attachments, I should be able to turn back to normal.'

"....."

'Give my younger version lots of attention. Do everything she wants, and then she should be satisfied.'

"....."

'Also, I would appreciate it if you didn't tell the others about this experiment of mine. I don't want Subaru and Ichigo, even Kureha-chan to worry too much. Usami-san is my natural enemy, so that can't be helped.'

"....."

'You can do it, Jirou-kun. I know you can turn me back to normal, I have faith in you. After all—you are my servant.' At the very end, Suzutsuki showed an angelic smile.

—Only for the recording to stop. Seems like this was all the DVD had to offer.

"....."

...Sheesh, she really is a selfish brat of a young lady. She wants me to fix her? Force of compliance is what I call that. This is clearly going beyond my work as the odd jobs guy. Even with an overtime bonus, this is going against labour laws. But...

“Konoe.” I carefully opened my mouth. “I...I’ll try to fix this mess Suzutsuki created.”

“.....”

“I really don’t want to, but she technically is my master, and having her as a child forever would just be troublesome.”

“.....”

“That’s why, Konoe, I want you to help me. I need your help in this. Let’s help Suzutsuki together.”

“.....”

Silence followed, but passed soon after.

“Of course.” Konoe nodded like it was nothing. “Jirou, I will help you. Just like you, I’m the young lady’s servant. Not to mention...I’m the young lady’s friend.”

“—Yeah, thanks a lot.”

Despite me honestly thanking Konoe, she for some reason averted her gaze. I guess she’s feeling awkward even now. But, this isn’t the moment to think about that. There’s something more important to do right now. Namely, we need to fix Suzutsuki—

Tralala~la~la~la~laaaa~

Suddenly, I heard a cheerful melody that didn’t fit this tense atmosphere. The sound came from the inside of my pocket, belonging to the famous movie ‘The Godfather’.

“What a timing...” I complained.

That melody was all too familiar, and I had set it up for but one person.

“Ah, hello? Onii-chan.”

Upon accepting the call, I heard a girlish and youthful voice. Indeed,

it was the current Suzutsuki Kanade calling me. Of course, with the mind of a child.

“What’s up?” While speaking up, I thought to myself.

Maybe talking to her will give me some kind of hint. That’s why, I need to properly hear her out.

“Well, I just saw an interesting billboard.”

“...Billboard?”

“Yup. Listen, Onii-chan...” Suzutsuki spoke with a voice as sweet as hot chocolate, and brought down her order. “Let’s go to an amusement park!”

1 Picture drama

Chapter 4: Welcome to Musashino Land

Musashino Land is an amusement park about two hours away from our town, assuming you use both trains and busses at your disposal. In terms of scale, it probably is about average when it comes to the number of attractions, and the name comes from the person who founded it. To be perfectly honest, I came here with my family several times before. Today, it's the 9th of October, and this is the second Saturday of the month. Our destination today was that amusement park.

“Woah, this is pretty amazing.”

After we got our free tickets from the employee, we walked through the ticket gate, to which the young Suzutsuki let out a voice of admiration. Roller coasters, coffee cups, a Merry-Go-Round...and various other attractions. I heard the screaming voices from the thrill ride. This isn't half bad. I haven't seen an amusement park in a while, but I always liked this atmosphere.

“Still, lots of people here today.”

The place was crawling with families and couples. Even if this was the weekend, is there really a need to gather such a crowd?

“You don't know, Onii-chan? Today is the last day for this amusement park.”

“The last?”

“I heard that they'll be doing a renewal, since the recession made their management and finances drop.”

“What a harsh world we live in.”

“But, the staff will stay the same, they said. They only got a new sponsor, so today is the final day before the renewal.”

“Is that why you wanted to come here today?”

“Yup! With it being the last day, it’ll remain in your memories longer, right! That’s what I thought when I heard about this two weeks ago!” Suzutsuki showed an innocent smile.

That’s right, this was decided two weeks ago. This plan was born two weeks ago, when she happened to see a billboard of this amusement park. It was a very childish decision, but perfect for us—Or rather, it was our perfect chance. After all, two whole weeks have passed since we watched that video.

—If you manage to satisfy the current me, I might turn back to normal.

Hearing these words from Suzutsuki, I did what I could. Every single day, I played with Derechuki-san. Thanks to that, I didn’t even attend school. Normally I should be worrying about my grades for the upcoming exams, but...this ain’t the time for that.

It’s been two whole weeks. I seriously didn’t expect things to stay this way for so long. Recently, both Masamune and Kureha have started to panic, fearing that maybe Suzutsuki might never return to normal. It’s enough, this is the limit. Suzutsuki hasn’t attended school for those two weeks either. The board at school was told about her being sick, but any longer, and they might grow suspicious, and she can’t be missing too much as the honor student.

That’s why, today is the day. An amusement park is filled with attractions where children can have fun. So, we’ll bring a conclusion to this whole mess here. Satisfy Suzutsuki, and return her memories. That...is what we decided through these two weeks, Konoe and I.

“Onii-chan, how do these clothes look?”

“Yeah, you look like a doll, it’s great.”

“Ehehe, thanks!”

Suzutsuki seemed to have grown even more excited because of my answer, as she twirled around me. She wore a long one-piece with frills all over. Seems to be a part of Ichigo-san’s hobby, as Suzutsuki

looked more dressed up than usual. Talking about that Ichigo-san, she is taking care of the house. As she feels deep LOVE towards Suzutsuki, she naturally fiercely protested and stated her desire to join us, but...

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“NO. Let go, Odd Jobs-san.”

“Calm down, Ichigo-san! You need to stay home!”

This happened in front of the Suzutsuki Residence. There, I was desperately trying to hold down Ichigo-san, embracing her from behind. This began a few minutes ago. We were preparing to head off to the amusement park, where Ichigo-san started acting weird. Hearing her out, one of the servant's who should be discharged from the hospital suddenly ended up worse again, and although it wasn't anything life threatening, they had to stay for a bit longer. As a result of that, Ichigo-san had even more work on her plate, which forced her to take up more duties at home...

“Not today! You still have a fever, right!?”

“Urk...” Ichigo-san suddenly grew silent.

That's right, she caught a cold. Since she was plagued with endless amounts of work for the past few days, her body couldn't keep up.

“No problem. A fever like this will only get me more motivated.”

“What are you talking about! You're sick, so you need rest!”

“NO. I am totally fine. As proof of that...See, I'll show you some dangerous juggling now.”

“Don't bring out weapons while you're sick!”

Metallic sounds rang out, as countless weapons belonging to Ichigo-san fell to the ground. A bar, chainsaw, Japanese katana...Waah, how many more weapons is she hiding? It's like a black market at this point.

“Let go, Odd Jobs-san, it is my duty to protect Kanade-ojousama.”

“Don’t worry, I’ll be with her.”

“That worries me even more.”

“What do you even mean by that!?”

“You probably plan on doing this and that to Kanade-ojousama while I’m not watching, right?”

“Like hell I would!”

“‘Wohoo! I wanna ride the coffee cups!’ ‘Young lady, there’s something even more interesting that you could ride’ ‘Eh? What is that? I wanna try it!’ ‘Fufu, then hope on my lap first’ ...is what will happen, and then you’ll start assaulting her...”

“You should get some rest as quickly as possible!”

No matter how you look at it, her fever has gone up. Having such fantasies is the best proof for that. Maybe using a sedative is our best bet here.

“Also, leaving aside the maid with the appendix, the chef was overworked, right? Why is she still hospitalized?”

“That’s because of Subaru, who visited her the other day. The chef went ‘Subaru-tan! I’ve been waiting to meet you! I’ll give you lots of lickies now!’, and started harassing Subaru, so she was hit with a Butler Knuckle, which didn’t help her case.”

“What an awful development!”

“More importantly, let me go, Odd Jobs-san, I’m going to the amusement park myself.”

“Ah, I told you not to grow rampant like that!”

I was forced to hold down Ichigo-san more. Because of her cold, she didn’t pack much strength, but...Damn it, my gynophobia really isn’t helping my case! At this rate, I’ll get a nosebleed, and Ichigo-san will

find out about my disposition!

“Stop, Ichigo.”

Thus, I was considering calling the little monster of my family, and forcefully rendering Ichigo-san unconscious—Using a wrestling move, of course. However, before I could use my final trump card, Suzutsuki arrived at the entrance, and called out to Ichigo-san.

“You’re not feeling well, right? You need to sleep.”

“Urk...However, Kanade-ojousama...”

“Ichigo, this is for your well-being, okay? It’s a shame that you can’t come with us, but we’ll bring some souvenirs with us.”

“...Kanade-ojousama!” Ichigo-san started tearing up. “You’ve grown up so well...”

You do remember that it’s still the child Suzutsuki inside of her, right?

“...Understood, I will protect the house.”

“Yup, that’s just fine.”

Ichigo-san was finally broken, and stayed calm...Thank god. Letting a sick person come with us was against my calm mind, but there’s also the part where letting her leave this place and roam into the free world. She’s constantly swinging around her chainsaw, right? If she did that in the middle of town, she’d be arrested. That’s why, as long as she stays at the residence...

“Odd Jobs-san.”

However, as if to betray my expectations, Ichigo-san called out to me. In her hand, she held a familiar piece of clothing.

“I-Ichigo-san, is that...”

“YES. A costume.”

“But, it’s different from the one before.”

“I worked all night to make it. You wear this during your trip at the amusement park.”

“Huuh!? Don’t joke with me! Why would I have to walk around like an eccentric weirdo!”

“Do you not like it?”

“Of course not!? Like hell I would...Waaah, don’t push the chainsaw against my neck! You’re scaring me!”

Ichigo-san’s chainsaw was on a rendezvous with my neck muscles. This ain’t no joke. Even if it’s a blunt chainsaw, it still is terrifying.

“Odd Jobs-san, I’m begging you, please wear this.”

“Even if you force this on me...!”

“I don’t want to become a criminal at my age.”

“What do you plan on doing!?”

“Don’t worry, I will guarantee as the president of Rouran Academy’s handicrafts club president. This costume feels great to wear.”

“...Really?”

“It’s like you’re in heaven.”

“I feel like I’ll be in heaven for a different reason!”

It took another 15 minutes until this whole conversation ended.

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That’s the end of the flashback. As a result of that, Ichigo-san stayed in the residence. She’s probably sleeping right about now, or depressed at home, going ‘To think I can’t go to the amusement park with Kanade-ojousama...’. To be honest, it’s not that I can’t sympathize with her...But, I have my own problems.

“Urk...”

The passing visitors of the park all gave me dubious gazes. I can't blame them—I'm wearing a costume after all, not to mention the one I wear during my work hours. Because Ichigo-san forced me, I had no other choice but to wear it after all. Now you can't even tell who's the customer and employee here. Just now, I got kicked by a brat as well.

“Suzutsuki, this costume is supposed to be different from the previous one, right?”

“Yeah, this one is a Mk2.”

“Mk2...”

“Ichigo did her best while making it.” Suzutsuki showed an innocent grin.

...Scary. What do you mean by Mk2? The original version already had countless other functions, like a nipple massage or electrical shocks. There's no doubt in my mind that that weird maid added more dangerous functions.

“Tell me, what functions does this one have?”

“It makes you lose weight if you wear it.”

“Ahhh, so like a diet? So, how effective is it?”

“You'll lose 30kg in 2 days.”

“Isn't that a bit too much!?”

“Also, it has a fireworks function.”

“Fireworks?”

“If you do anything weird to me, you'll turn into fireworks, is what Ichigo said.”

“.....”

...Yup, I'll blow up. What a violent function to add, seriously. Then again, I doubt it's an explosive. After all, Suzutsuki might fall victim to the explosion if she's close by. This is probably just a warning from Ichigo-san, namely that I don't do anything weird to the young lady.

"Hey, what do you mean by weird, Onii-chan?"

"A child like you doesn't have to know."

"Hmm...Ah, right. I'm wearing new underwear today, wanna take a look? It's cute, right?"

"Stop that! Don't pull up your skirt!"

"Should I take it off and give it to you, then?"

"The law forbids children to strike deals like that!"

No, seriously, I'll be arrested at this rate. What's wrong with playing at an amusement park with a child!? Of course, that excuse won't run at all, it'll surely turn into some erotic play.

"You lolicon, you're not even holding back in public?"

See what I mean? Masamune threw cold words at me with a harsh tone. She wore a similar one-piece like Suzutsuki, but her skirt was oddly short...Waah, I don't know where to look. She's really styled up herself, didn't she. But, she seemed a bit restless, as she looked around. I wonder, (is there missing text here?)

"Young lady, how about we ride this first?"

Without Ichigo-san around, Konoe took the lead, and called out to her master. She wore stylish pants paired with a tight shirt, together with a cool-looking necktie. No matter how you looked at it, she was a handsome guy, but a girl in reality. As I was inspecting her clothes, our eyes met for a second, but she let out a faint 'Hmpf', and looked away.

...Still no good, huh. During these past two weeks, as we were working together to return Suzutsuki back to normal, I tried to make up with Konoe. However, things didn't quite work out. I feel like

we're both feeling awkward towards each other...

"Nii-san, what's that complicated expression for."

As I was lost in thought, Kureha called out to me. She wore a jacket with hot pants, as well as kneesocks reaching up to her knees. It looks like she can move easily in that, but isn't she cold?

"Are you unsure what to ride first?"

"Not at all."

"The thrill ride seems interesting though."

"I'm not too interested."

"Why? It looks scary, and enjoyable."

"It doesn't seem all that scary to me."

The reason for that is simple. Rather than some roller coaster or free fall, the wrestling training held at my home is far more terrifying, and gives me a much greater thrill.

"Also, the one who'll decide what we ride is Suzutsuki, right?"

All people present here are Suzutsuki's servants. Just now, Konoe asked for Suzutsuki's opinion, so it'd be a basic idea to prioritize her desires, right?

"Hmmm...which one should I do?" Suzutsuki swallowed the tip of her index finger, as she showed a childish thinking gesture.

According to the pamphlet of this amusement park, there's about 30 different attractions here, so it makes sense that you wouldn't know which one to pick.

"I don't think I need to see the Merry-Go-Round. I can always do that when I feel like it after all."

"Always do that? I thought this park was closing today?"

"At home, you know."

“What?”

“Onii-chan will be the horse.”

“Why!?”

Ichigo said ‘Odd Jobs-san has this odd interest in wanting to be treated like a horse and mounted’, you know?”

“Can you please not believe everything you hear?”

What misleading propaganda is this. That damn yandere maid. How low is she trying to pull my reputation? Her love for Suzutsuki is no joke.

“Come on, what about the sea lion show?”

“I can do that at home as well.”

“Am I supposed to be the sea lion?”

“It’s where you let others do your bidding while giving them fodder, right?”

“What an awful way to phrase it!”

“That’s your role after all, Onii-chan.”

“Why thank you for telling me.”

“Ehehe, no problem!”

“I was being sarcastic, you hear me!?”

Rather than being the odd jobs guy, I was demoted to a pet. What hurt the most is that I was already wearing a costume. When will the collar come?

“Young lady, how about that hero show over there?” Konoe offered an option since the young Suzutsuki apparently had trouble deciding.

A hero show...Now that’s aimed for even smaller children. Though I heard about some housewives watching those shows because of the

handsome actors.

“No can do, we’d have to wait too long before the show starts.”

“I-Is that so...” The butler showed a dejected reaction.

She’s so dejected? I thought something was weird, and looked over at the billboard belonging to the hero show, reading the title—

‘Butler Squadron: The ButRanger’.

“.....”

For a second, I felt dizziness assault me. The hell am I looking at? Butler Squadron? ButRanger? They probably combined Butler and Ranger for that, but it sounds obscene as a result of that. Also, why would there be allies of peace who work as butlers? This almost feels like it was directed at a real butler who was present, namely Konoe Subaru...

“Ah, look at that, Nii-san. They’re handing out balloons.”

“Balloons?”

I looked over, and found costumed people handing out balloons to the children around. I guess they must be the actors of that show, huh? I could see one handsome guy wearing a butler uniform, and another with glasses...Wait, hold on. This is just my imagination, right? These costumes look far too familiar...

“J-Jirou...”

It seems like Subaru-sama had a similar reaction.

“C-Calm down, Konoe.” I said, all in order to calm myself down.

After all, these costumes looked like they were modeled after me and Konoe. Although they looked a bit more cartoon-ish, I could clearly see the resemblance. Not to mention those balloons, they have the design of a certain murder sheep...

“Nya? Nii-san, you didn’t know?”

As we were shaking in terror, Kureha explained it with a natural tone of voice.

“The one who came up with that hero show was NaruNaru.”

“.....”

I knew it. What an awful timeline this is. With NaruNaru, Kureha is referring to the glasses junkie Narumi Nakuru. She basically lives off creating BL material starring me and Konoe. And now, she created this hero show. Weird...wasn't an amusement park supposed to sell hope and dreams? Why does this feel like I was pushed into a nightmare?

“K-Kureha-san, why did Nakuru come up with a hero show?”

“Well, this amusement park is going through a renovation soon, yeah? The sponsor for this is NaruNaru's family.”

“Oh yeah, her family's that toy manufacturer...”

So it's basically her influence which allowed this. That wench, she's relying on the fact that her parents are sponsors for this park in order to push through her own convenience and desires. I can already see the plot of her hero show. Maybe I could call for public slander.

“But, why did Nakuru's family sponsor this place?”

“Did you not hear about it from Onee-sama? This amusement park here was having trouble with management and economy for a while, so the vice captain...”

“What did Schrö-senpai do?”

With vice captain, Kureha must be referring to Nakuru's older sister Narumi Schrödinger. But, why does her name appear now?

“When they came here before, she couldn't ride the roller coaster.”

“What?”

“The roller coaster, you know. When the vice captain tried to ride it,

she was told ‘You’re not tall enough’ or ‘Grade school students can’t ride it’, which is why...”

“.....”

Is that why they bought it? I can see the angered Schrö-senpai run to her parents and beg them to buy up this park, all because they made fun of her for being small. I mean, in the end, it’s all her fault, although I get angry at that.

“That being the case, Musashino Land will be reborn as Narumi Land next year. NaruNaru said that ‘Once the renovation is done, Nakuru will invite Senpai and the others’, but what do you think?”

“You politely decline that offer once you get a chance.”

“Ehh, why?”

“I feel like the attractions will be filled to the brim with BL nonsense.”

I don’t even want to imagine it. Knowing that glasses junkie, she’ll probably say ‘All BL couples get free entry!’ or something like that.

“Hey, Onii-chan, what’s BL?”

“Eh...?”

Suzutsuki must have heard our conversation, and asked me this with an innocent tone.....This is bad. How should I explain this? Explaining BL to a young girl is way too dangerous, especially with no preparation at all.

“Hey hey, tell me!”

“Well, BL is...an abbreviation for bacon lettuce.”

“Bacon lettuce?”

“Y-Yeah. You often use it for sandwiches, right?”

“Yup! I love it! What about you, Onii-chan?”

“I-I like it myself.”

“Really? Then we’re the same!” Suzutsuki showed a bright smile.

Alright, this is going great. Explaining boys love to a girl who has yet to go through sex ed is way too hard of a task. Not to mention hearing that from a guy is a bit...

“Stupid chicken, what have you two been talking about? Did you decide on the attraction you want to check out?” Masamune seemingly got curious about our conversation, and called out to us.

Suzutsuki didn’t waste a breath, and spoke up.

“Hey, Usamin, do you like BL?”

“Huuuuuh!?”

Because of this sudden question, Masamune started panicking...Not good. This will definitely get even more annoying.

“Tell me. Do you like it? Do you not?”

“T-There’s no way I would like that!”

“Ehh, I really love it though.”

“Are you being serious!?”

“Yup, I eat it everyday.”

“Huuuh!? E-Eating? Is that some BL-related vocabulary?” The nasty rabbit was baffled.

Clearly, their conversations didn’t match up at all. Of course, bacon and lettuce don’t match up with boys’ love.

“D-Do you like it that much?”

“Why don’t you try it as well, Usamin? I’m sure you’ll get addicted to it.”

“Don’t scare me like that!”

“It’s fine, it’ll only be scary in the beginning.”

“E-E-E-Even if you tell me that...!”

“Also, Onii-chan said he likes it as well.”

“Why!?”

“It’s not weird for boys to like BL, right?”

“~~~!” Masamune looked at me with an awfully scornful gaze.

Gyaaaa, she totally has the wrong idea about things! Now I’ll turn into a BL lolicon! Seriously, how bad could that be.

“Stupid chicken, you...”

“C-Calm down, Masamune, the BL Suzutsuki is talking about refers to ___”

“Don’t just explain it! There’s only one BL she could mean!”

“No, it’s not! Hear out Suzutsuki’s explanation then!”

“...Hey, Suzutsuki Kanade, what do you think BL is?”

“I mean, it’s the BL you use for sandwiches...”

“Sandwiches!?”

“You don’t know? Basically, you sandwich it, and—”

“S-S-S-Sandwich it!?” Masamune grew pale, as she panicked.

...This one’s done for. At this rate, no matter how much I explain, it’ll only cause her to panic more. My best bet is to change the topic entirely.

“H-Hey, Suzutsuki, did you decide on the attraction you wanted to see?” I asked, to which Suzutsuki nodded energetically.

Following that, she pointed in a certain direction.

“I want to try out that over there.”

“That?”

I followed Suzutsuki’s gaze...and found a large building that resembled an abandoned hospital—It’s a haunted house, a template attraction at an amusement park. Not to mention that the one they have here takes you at least 30 minutes to clear, which makes it pretty popular.

“A-A haunted house...”

A single maid started quivering in fear upon hearing her master’s request. Of course, it was none other than Sakamachi Kureha. She is absolutely terrified of anything occult related.

“What’s wrong, Kureha-chan? Are you scared?”

“W-Well, that’s...”

“Weird, you’re older than me, right?”

“!”

“Yet, you’re afraid of ghosts...Maybe you really are a chi—”

“No! I’m not scared at all! Haunted houses have nothing on me!”
Kureha puffed out her chest, acting tough.

You can just be honest with yourself, being afraid of ghosts isn’t that childish.

“Then, that’s decided. Are you fine with that, Subaru?”

“Yes, whatever you wish for, young lady.”

“Fufu, then let’s go!”

The young lady walked on ahead, with us walking after her. Since this was the final day, we had to wait around thirty minutes, but because I was talking with everyone, it didn’t feel that long at all. And then, it was finally our turn. We showed the employee our

tickets, and set foot inside the haunted house.

“Stop.” Suzutsuki stopped us. “Going in there together isn’t scary at all, so let’s split up.”

“So we’ll go one by one?”

“Nah, since we’re five people, it’s fine if we go as a group of two and a group of three, right? We’ll decide the teams with rock paper scissors, and the first two to win will be the group of two.” Suzutsuki said, and immediately took the fitting stance.

Wah, hold on, how am I supposed to prepare myself here! Ahhh, rock paper scissors it is! We all joined in with energetic voices, and at the end of it all...

“Ah, I won.”

“Urk...”

Three people put out paper, and two chose scissors. The two winners were Masamune and me, which also concluded the team building. Basically, Masamune and I were the first ones to set foot inside the haunted house.

“...Hmpf, so it’s you two first.” Having flashed paper during the decisive battle, Konoe now sounded clearly disgruntled.

Did she want to go first that badly? I feel like entering first is the scariest. Not to mention...

“Stupid chicken, why do you look so bothered?”

“I mean, that’s because you’re my partner.”

“What’s that supposed to mean!?”

“Because...you have a feeling for ghosts, right?”

“It’s not such a big deal, honestly. I sometimes hear voices, or any pictures I take have silhouettes of ghosts in them.”

“That’s why I hate this!”

“W-Why? No need to worry, if a real one appears, I’ll tell you.”

“I don’t need that!”

“Just to let you know, there are some in there.”

“Gyaaaaaah!?”

Who are you, I*o Junji!? That sounds awfully convincing! I don’t want this. I don’t want to walk through a haunted house with her of all people. This is the kind of development where we joke around, but a real ghost will actually appear. I might not be as bad as Kureha, but I’m not the biggest fan of ghosts and so on.

“It’s fine, I figured this might happen, so I studied horror movies.”

“Horror movies?”

“‘Exor*ist’, for example.”

“You’re basically asking to get possessed, right.”

“Also, ‘Nau*icaa of the Valley of the Wind’.”

“That’s a leap in genre alright!”

“It’s the same. In the end, you just have to tame them, right? Tell them you’re not scared, it’ll be fine.”

“I’m honestly more scared of what you’re trying to do!”

Is she some kind of exorcist? What’s there to tame, it’s a ghost. Either way, this haunted house sure as hell doesn’t feel great to me. My antenna was going off like crazy. It wouldn’t be weird if my old man suddenly appeared in front of me.

“Come on, let’s go.”

“Y-Yeah, got it.”

That being said, running away now would make me way too much of

a chicken bastard, so I followed Masamune. As you'd expect, the inside was awfully dark. I heard that they'll be adding Silent Sheep after the renovation is done. I'm glad I came today, I definitely don't want to see that.

"Urk..."

Walking down a dimly lit hallway was as eerie as always. And for some reason, we need to walk like this for another thirty minutes. As a result of that, there's an emergency exit on the way in case you started to feel sick or if you couldn't handle the haunted house anymore.

"...Stupid chicken." Masamune muttered with an awfully serious tone.

"W-What's wrong?"

"Well, you know."

"I know?"

"Behind you...No, it's nothing."

"It definitely isn't nothing, right!?"

At least be honest with me! That'll at least save me from some severe damage!

"Do your shoulders feel heavy?"

"N-Now that you mention it, my shoulders started feeling a bit heavier compared to before we entered..."

"Listen, you definitely, under no circumstances, can turn around, okay!"

"Y-Yes..." I turned into a robot that was only capable of nodding my head.

Let's run away. This is the Demon Lord's hideout. I'm sure some kind of urban legend will jump at me. A staircase to a different world

would be fitting as well.

“...Not good, we’re leaving.”

“Eh?”

“We’re using the emergency exit. We can’t stay here.”

“Why...”

“Long and white fingers...around your neck...”

I did not waste a second, and immediately started dashing towards the emergency exit. Upon opening the door, I was showered with the dazzling sunlight. It seems like we made it outside. That being said, it was quite a ways away from the entrance. Did Suzutsuki and the others already enter? If they don’t escape soon, they’ll end up like ghost food...

“Stupid chicken, what are you doing?”

I was about to take out my smartphone and contact Konoe, when Masamune stopped me.

“Well, I was thinking of informing Konoe so that they escape themselves.”

“Why?”

“I mean, the poltergeist...”

“No need to worry, that was just me making stuff up.”

“...What?”

Making stuff up...Wait, don’t tell me...

“That’s right, I was lying. There’s no ghosts here, it’s just your average haunted house.” Masamune spoiled me with no remorse.

This damn nasty rabbit...She’s done me dirty. She just nonchalantly deceived me. Ahh, that’s so annoying. Even if I was scared, I can’t believe I just fell for that. And since I left already, there’s no way to

get back inside again. No, more than anything, why did Masamune force me to go outside?

“—Stupid chicken.” As I was filled with doubts, Masamune pointed at me in embarrassment. “You—go on a date with me right now!”

“...What?”

In the midst of all the attractions that Musashino Land offered, from thrill rides, haunted houses, the one thing that shocked me the most were Masamune’s words.

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“...Um, a date? Why?”

“Eh? Haven’t I told you enough already?”

In the face of my question, Masamune enjoyed some soft ice cream as she answered. Right now, we’re waiting in line for the attraction—of the water splash coaster. From a height of 30m, it was almost a straight drop, right into a pool of water, where you’re guaranteed to end up wet. Right after we left the haunted house, we lined up here. Don’t ask me why.

“I figured that today would be a great opportunity to work on your gynophobia. By going on a date with a girl, you’ll surely get used to them, right?”

“Well, you’re probably not wrong in that, but...”

“I really don’t want you to become a lolicon, or tread the path of BL. You want to fix your gynophobia...and experience love with girls, right? That’s why I’ll help you. Since we’re friends.”

“What you’re saying isn’t wrong, but why did you force me to pay for the ice cream?”

“It’s a date, so the man is supposed to pay, right?” Masamune said, and got another taste of the ice cream.

It was pretty expensive, okay? Not to mention that vanilla ice cream

sounds great right now...Ahh, I should have bought some myself.

“You better be ready, I’ll have you repay me for that.”

“Eh? W-With...my body?”

“No.”

“E-Even if my body is filled with cream right now, saying ‘Eat me~’ is too much...”

“Is the inside of your head filled with a wedding cake!?”

“...What do you mean by that?”

“It’s something worth celebrating!”

“Don’t use an example that’s hard to understand!” Masamune was fuming in anger. “Also, I wouldn’t be able to do this if Suzutsuki Kanade was here...”

“Why?”

“Isn’t that obvious? There’s no way she would give the okay to the two of us going on a date.”

“Ahhhh...”



I get what she's on about. I'm not too sure if I can even say that, but the Suzutsuki right now—Derechuki-san is practically glued to me. Even if this is to fix my gynophobia, she most likely wouldn't give the green light for us to go on a date like this.

“Not to mention...I was looking forward to this.”

“What?”

“B-Because...I’ve been waiting for this day to come...This is my first time coming to an amusement park.”

Normally you’d go at least once with your family...Well, I guess not. Masamune’s been plagued with family-related problems for a long time. Because of her harsh attitude and cold voice, she doesn’t have any friends either. That’s why it makes sense that this is her first actual visit to an amusement park.

“But, why was there such a need to move separately from Konoe and the others?”

“B-Because...”

“?”

“Enjoying the amusement park too much...would make me seem like a child, and it’s embarrassing...” Masamune muttered with a flustered voice that was about to vanish into thin air.

.....Well, whatever. I’m sure that it’ll still take a bit longer until Konoe and the others leave the haunted house. I can also understand Masamune’s sentiments, but even more than that...

“Alright, I got it, so don’t look like you’re about to break out in tears.”

“W-Who’s about to cry!?” Masamune averted her face with a pout.

She probably was worried if I was going to agree or not. That’s why, it’s probably my best bet to just simply agree, and—

“!?”

Immediately after, I started thinking that maybe my choice was wrong after all. At a moment’s notice, Masamune wrapped her arms around mine.

“U-Um, Masamune-san?”

“No complaining. This is to fix your gynophobia.” She threw these words at me, but her tone of voice almost made it sound like she was

enjoying this.

Waaah, this nasty rabbit, did she awaken to her sadistic side now? Or, is she just enjoying the amusement park that much? Whichever it may be, I wasn't given much time to think about it, as my gynophobia symptoms were flaring up. Not to mention...

"...!"

Her chest...because she's pressing her body against mine, her breasts were directly touching my elbow, and gyaaaaa! What is this sensation! This is much more terrifying than any thrill ride!

"Hey, stupid chicken."

"W-What do you want?"

"There's two more things I want to ask you, can I?"

"W-Why do I have to answer your questions?"

"You don't need to answer me, you know? I have my own way of getting that out of you." She muttered with a teasing tone of voice, as she pressed her chest onto me even further.

T-This woman, she's clearly trying to make things worse. I'm at my limit now, my nose is burning up.

"A-Alright, ask me anything."

"Fufu, very well."

The promise was formed. I-I'm saved...But, I wonder what she wants to ask?

"First...about Suzutsuki Kanade." She started talking. "You're hiding something in regards to Suzutsuki Kanade, right?"

"Urk."

"Seems like I hit the jackpot. I thought something was off. After all, you were so focused on playing with her all the time, simply because

of her order. That must have had some special reason, right?"

"T-That's..."

"Just be honest with me. If not..."

"...! O-Okay, I'll say it! So please, stop clinging to my arm like that!"

I surrendered quickly in order for me to not pass out...It can't be helped. I kept quiet about the DVD, but I think it's about time I told her.

"The thing is..."

From there on out, I revealed everything. The fact that Konoe and I saw that DVD, that Suzutsuki herself chose to become a young girl, and that we tried our hardest to satisfy Suzutsuki so that she returned back to normal.

"Hmm, I see." After hearing everything, Masamune let out a sigh. "So she chose to become an 8-year old girl, huh. And now, she can't turn back. In order to fix her, you want to satisfy her."

"That's about it."

However, there's one thing I didn't tell Masamune about. Namely, the reason why Suzutsuki chose this method. I mean, what good would telling her do? If I confessed the real reason, these two would only hate each other more. Well, it's already pretty bad. They're rich lady and commoner, they live in different worlds.

"But...it makes sense that you would quickly want to fix that."

"Eh?"

To my surprise, Masamune sounded oddly worried about her natural enemy Suzutsuki.

"D-Don't get the wrong idea. This is for my sake. I'm not good at dealing with children. When Suzutsuki's like this, I can never get angry at her."

“Masamune...”

That damn tsundere. She’s probably exhausted from always being considerate of young Suzutsuki. I get her. Having to deal with this innocent attitude all the time can be troublesome.

“Not to mention...I can’t stand her always clinging to you...”

“Agreed. Any more than this, and people will see me as a lolicon.”

“Y-Yeah, that’s what I meant.” Masamune bit her lip, sounding like there was something else she wanted to say.

And now, it was our turn in line. Around ten people can ride this water coaster at the same time. You ride as pairs, in five lines.

“...First row, huh.”

Masamune’s and my seats were at the very front of the coaster. It had to be these seats, huh. We’ll probably end up drenched thanks to that.

“Stupid chicken, I got this from an employee, we’re supposed to put these on our heads.” Masamune handed me what looked like a small vinyl sheet.

I see, I’m using this as a guard, huh.

‘The coaster ride will now depart!’

After we sat down on our seats and put down the safety bar, the ride started moving up the lane. Hmm, this is pretty high. I haven’t ridden this kind of attraction in a while, so my heart is racing in excitement.

“Hey, what about that other question you had?” I asked, remembering our previous conversation.

“...Yeah.”

However, only silence followed, and the mere sound of metallic rattling could be heard. Finally, she opened her mouth, and...

“Did something happen between you and Subaru-sama?” She asked.

“What do you...”

“I mean, recently you don’t seem that close anymore, right? Or rather than that, things feel awkward between the two of you.”

“.....”

“Did you...have a fight?” Her eyes looked at me in uncertainty.

Being met with such an honest gaze, I could only answer with a faint ‘...Yeah’. And then, another silence ensued. We were still going up the rails. Despite the metallic sound still filling our ears, this silence felt longer than before.

“.....”

I wouldn’t even know how much time has passed. With a bit more, we would reach the summit.

“—It’s fine.” Masamune said.

“Eh?”

“Like I said, it’ll be fine. I’ll help you out. Luckily, we’re at an amusement park today, so this is your perfect chance to make up, right.”

“.....”

“You were really close with Subaru-sama, right? Since you’re friends, you naturally would want to make up.”

“...Yeah, thanks.” I gave my honest gratitude.

I guess it’s true that all you need in life are friends. To think that Masamune herself would offer to help me.

“Not to mention...Subaru-sama is a boy, so there’s no problem even if you’re close...”

“Eh?”

“N-Nothing. But, no setting foot onto the path of BL, okay! No matter

how close you may be! Ah, right, I'll help you cure Suzutsuki's problem while I'm at it as well."

That one's just the added bonus!? — I really wanted to retort, but just getting help from Masamune in regards to Suzutsuki is something I should be thankful for. Yeah, all you need is a good friend...

"Masamune."

"Hm? What?"

"I mean, this is going to sound a bit cheesy, but...I'm glad that you and I are friends."

I got swept along with the mood, and uttered something awfully embarrassing.

"Eh—"

I felt my body floating, and the wind blew past me at higher speeds than before. Following that, a great amount of screams rang out—We were descending down the coaster. We reached the summit without me even realizing, and now we were nearing the water—directly hitting it. Water splashed up around us everywhere. After that, it started raining down on us.

Good thing I covered my body with the vinyl a split-second before that. I almost forgot that I was given that thing, but I'm glad I remembered it in time. Now I got away without being drench...

"—Um, Masamune?"

What are you doing—I wanted to complain, but I lost all my words. **She was drenched.** Water was dripping off her clothes. It's like she was training under a waterfall...

"You..."

Did she forget to put on the vinyl guard?

"Wha...wha...wha...!?"

However, Masamune was blushing furiously, without even realizing that she ended up like that. She completely forgot herself.

“Y-You, what embarrassing nonsense are you saying!”

“Wha?”

“You said something weird like that, surprising me!”

“Surprising you...”

Was it that weird? I don't think you need to freeze up like that. I do agree that it was mighty embarrassing though.

“Don't get the wrong idea, okay! It's not...like I was happy or anything!”

Upon reaching the end of the ride, even after we walked away from our seats, Masamune was still rambling on and on...I mean, that's fine and all, but...

“...Um, Masamune-san.”

“What do you want!?”

“Well, your clothes...”

“...Eh?”

As friends, I thought of informing Masamune of her current appearance, to which she blushed even more aggressively. The one-piece she was wearing was utterly drenched, which led the fabric to stick to her skin, revealing her slender and feminine lines, as well as emphasizing her underwear...

“Stop looking, stupid chicken!”

“Guha!?”

Immediately after, Masamune's crescent kick slammed right into my flank. T-This damn nasty rabbit, she never holds back, huh...!

“Idiot! Dummy! Big big dummy! You're the worst! Why did things

have to end up this way!?”

“You got splashed by water, right?”

“It’s your fault because you said something embarrassing like that!”

“You still didn’t have to kick me like that!” I screamed while dodging another incoming kick.

Think about the other people watching us!

“What is that? A fight?”

“It’s nice being young.”

“You’re flirting way too much, alright.”

These and many other words could be heard, all of them misunderstanding the situation.

“Geez, you dummy...” Masamune said, but still accepted the towel from the employee, and dried herself.

I’m glad it’s a considerate employee helping us. It is a clear day today, but having it dry naturally would take too long. However, that still hasn’t cleared up all my problems. I definitely made Masamune angry. Maybe she’ll reconsider helping me now...

“...You don’t have to be so worried, okay.” There, right after we stepped out of the attraction, Masamune opened her mouth after getting a good look at my face. “Whether it’s you getting along with Subaru-sama, or turning Suzutsuki back to normal, I’ll help you. Because...we’re friends, right?”

“...Yeah, thanks.”

She did sound a bit embarrassed, but I still gave her my gratitude... Yeah, no matter what she may say or do—Masamune is a great person.

“...Jirou, what are you doing here with Usami?”

Right there, I heard an awfully displeased alto voice. When I turned towards the source of that voice, I spotted Konoe Subaru. She gave me and Masamune a harsh glare.

“...Ah.”

Crap, I totally forgot. It was around time that these guys got out of the haunted house, yeah. But then, why is it just Konoe here?

“Right after we left the haunted house, we split up to look for you and Usami...but to think you two were enjoying yourselves like this.” Her voice was shaking in anger.

Crap, I need to quickly explain everything. After all, Masamune is now going to help us with Suzutsuki, so—

“Gohu!?”

Right as I tried to make up excuses, a butler knuckle rammed right into my solar plexus.

“I thought you were better than this...” Konoe spoke with watery eyes.

She looked like a child that was about to break out in tears.

“We planned to work hard for the young lady’s sake today, and yet you left her alone to have fun with Usami instead...”

“...! Wait, Konoe! I need to tell you about what Masamune and I talked—”

“Shut up! Like I’d listen to your excuses now!” Konoe averted her face, and walked away.

She’s probably going back to where Suzutsuki and Kureha are waiting.

“S-Stupid chicken...Um, sorry about that. I might have just made things worse...”

“...No, it’s fine. I’m partially to blame as well.” I cheered up the

apologizing Masamune.

In fact, it's not her fault. However, after that kiss incident before, I feel like our relationship moved into the opposite direction. It was almost noon now, with a clear blue sky above us, and yet my heart was clouded with fear about where this would go.

♀ × ♂

As expected, Konoe would not forgive me no matter what I said. Or rather, she wouldn't even hear me out. Immediately after that, we grouped up with Suzutsuki and the others, so I tried to immediately explain myself, but I couldn't even properly talk with her. Although I was clearly to blame, that still didn't sit right with me. I mean, not even responding to me? Masamune and I merely rode an attraction together, why is there a need to be this angry?

But, if I retaliated now, it would break out into a real fight. That's why I held my tongue for now. I know how stubborn Subaru-sama can be, but with time, her anger should subside. So, after we finished lunch, we went to adventure the amusement park again. Biking, a free-fall, a roller coaster, a mirror house, one-person bungee jumping that I was forced into by the young lady, and right after the hero show, we moved to a game center. There was countless playing, and even more playing. In the meantime, the time of day moved to evening.

“...Phew.” I let out a sigh.

It's no use, I'm not seeing any progress at all. And no, I'm not talking about Suzutsuki. Derechuki-san was thoroughly enjoying the amusement park, and looked happy as could be. I feel like we got a lot of points in regards to satisfying her.

The real problem is Konoe Subaru. She wouldn't even let me talk to her, and just averted her gaze.

“Stupid chicken, what do you plan on doing?”

Masamune must have felt guilty, because she called out to me with an anxious voice. Even if you ask me that...I should be able to clear

up the misunderstanding regarding Masamune. The problem is what comes after—Namely, the kiss. That's the main reason things turned awkward between the two of us. Without clearing that up, we won't improve our relationship. So in order to put an end to this—

“Onii-chan.”

As I was lost in thought, Suzutsuki pulled on my costume.

“What's up?”

“Um, I want to ride that thing next.” She smiled, and pointed towards a single spot.

As it turns out—she wanted to ride the Ferris Wheel, yet another template attraction you would find at an amusement park. Looking at the pamphlet, this Ferris Wheel was at least 100m tall, and one ride could take 19 minutes.

“Hey, Onii-chan.”

“Yeah, sure.”

“Yaaaay! Ferris Wheel!” Derechuki-san jumped in joy.

Judging from that, she seems satisfied alright.

“The gondola seems big enough for all of us to fit as well.”
Masamune commented after looking at the billboard next to the line.

I bet the sight must be great, yeah. With these thoughts, we lined up, and it took us around ten minutes when it was our turn.

“Then, you hop on first, Onii-chan.”

“Hm? Y-Yeah.”

Urged by Suzutsuki, I stepped onto the gondola. Oh, it's shaking a bit. Now that I think about it, this is my first time taking a ride on a Ferris Wheel.

“Next it's me. Onii-chan, lend me your hand.”

“Yeah yeah, I understand, young lady.” I stuck out one hand from the Ferris Wheel, and grabbed Suzutsuki’s hand.

For just a bit, it should be fine even with my gynophobia.

“Fufu, thank you.” She showed a teasing smile, and hopped on the gondola.

Immediately after—

“...Eh?”

A **clicking** sound rang out, and the door of the gondola closed. Of course, the Ferris Wheel did not stop to wait for us. While leaving behind Kureha, Masamune, and even Konoe, we moved forward. They definitely can’t join our gondola anymore.

“Onii-chan.” Her voice sounded seductive for some reason.

After the door closed, Derechuki-san sat down next to me, and smiled.

“S-Suzutsuki, what are you...”

“I’m sorry, I just wanted to enjoy a brief date with Onii-chan, that’s all.”

“A date...”

“Come on, sit down. We’ll talk a bit during this ride, what do you think?”

“.....”

Seeing no other option, I sat down facing Suzutsuki...She set me up. She probably suggested the Ferris Wheel with that exact plot in mind. That’s Suzutsuki Kanade for you, she’s still a young child, but she knows how to use her surroundings. But...what is this? What does she want to talk about with me?

“First, let me ask something.”

As the Ferris Wheel continued to turn, we were looking outside. It would take 19 minutes until we're back on the ground. In the midst of this date that was far too short, Suzutsuki began the questioning.

"Why did you play this much with me for the past two weeks?"

"W-Why...? Because I'm your servant."

"Nonsense, I see. You were weird this entire time. And to be perfectly honest, the same goes for Subaru. You were almost desperate when it came to playing with me, weren't you. Before, you would be very hesitant when I invited you. Tell me, why?" Suzutsuki tilted her head.

...Are you serious? To think she realized what we were trying to do. She's got way too good of an intuition. Damn Devil Suzutsuki, even as a child she doesn't hold back with her devilish power.

"Onii-chan?"

"...Alright."

Having come this far, I probably won't be able to hide it. Once we made it down to the ground, she'll ask Konoe the same thing, and she won't be able to go against her master. For now, I decided to explain everything. After hearing out everything—

"Hmm, I see." Derechuki-san nodded. "Basically, you were constantly playing with me in order to satisfy me, yes?"

"Yeah, that's right."

"Ahaha, thank you, Onii-chan. I'm lucky to have such great servants, really. Because of that...I'm thoroughly enjoying myself."

"Eh...?" I couldn't hide my shock in the face of these words.

"These past two weeks, you always played with me. You, Subaru, Kureha-chan, even Ichigo-san and Usamin, getting to play and have fun with all of you, how could I not be fulfilled."

"S-So then..."

Will you turn back to normal? Will you turn back to the high school girl Suzutsuki Kanade.

“But, it’s still not enough.” She smiled. “There’s still something lacking.”

“Lacking?”

“I am satisfied, really. But, that’s just one. Judging from the conclusion I came up with over the past two weeks, there is one more thing left to do. Once you execute that, I should be able to return back to how I previously was.”

“R-Really!?” I jumped up in shock.

“Calm down, Onii-chan. My question comes first.” She said, and looked outside the window.

I followed her gaze, and realized that the gondola reached quite the height. From up here, I could see the orange-colored town. Everywhere I looked, it was illuminated.

“So then, my second question.” Suzutsuki spoke with a somewhat mature tone, and opened her mouth again. “Did something happen between you and Subaru?”

“Wha...”

Now hold on. Why is she asking me that? How is that related to turning her back to normal?

“Ah, before that.” As I was baffled, Suzutsuki grinned. “You know about Subaru’s secret, right?”

“...!?”

I was speechless. Suzutsuki saw my reaction, and let out a snicker.

“You don’t need to hide it. You know that Subaru is a girl. I’ve been with you these two weeks, I know at least that much.”

“...You...”

“Of course, I haven’t told anybody. That would force Subaru to quit as my butler after all. This is just a secret between you and me.” She said, and put her index finger on her lips.

I sighed in relief. Thank god, if Suzutsuki were to tell Ichigo-san about this, things would definitely go south.

“Yes, that confirms everything. Let’s get back on the main topic. Onii-chan, why did things end up like this between you and Subaru?”

“Urk...”

“You had a fight?”

“No, not really...”

“Did you force a kiss on her by any chance?”

“...! N-No! I might have been a bit forceful, but it was an accident!”

—Wait no no! Why does she know that I kissed Konoe?

“I knew it.”

Seeing my reaction, Suzutsuki nodded.

“H-How did you know?”

“Eh? Intuition, of course?”

“Are you an esper!?”

“Fufu, just kidding. I heard it from Subaru’s sleeping talk. I often sleep together with her, right? She suddenly started muttering ‘Kiss with Jirou...’, you know. She’s so cute, I couldn’t hold back my desire to hug her.”

“...’zat so.”

“I also kissed her.”

“Why did you go that far!?”

“Fufu, calm down, Onii-chan, it was just on the cheek.”

“You can’t just assault your servants...”

I mean, Konoe sure is cute, but...this isn’t the time to be thinking about that. Why? How is this kiss important now? Where does this lead to the way of curing Suzutsuki? What does she want me to do? There’s only six minutes left. A bit more, and this stroll through the sky will be over.

“...Onii-chan.”

There, Suzutsuki suddenly called out to me with an oddly serious voice. A bit of silence passed, and she moved her soft lips—

“How...do you feel about Subaru?”

With this question I could never have expected, I was left speechless.

“How...”

“Tell me. If you explain this to me, I’ll teach you the method to turn me back to normal.”

“...!”

“Come on, Onii-chan, we don’t have much time.” She said, and showed me her wristwatch.

Time was moving on rapidly. We’re slowly reaching the ground. But...what should I say here? How do I feel about Konoe? What is she to me? No, that’s obvious. She’s my best friend. That’s what we promised during last summer break. That we’d be best friends. That’s why I want to make up with her again. It’s all so that I don’t have to see her saddened face...that I don’t have to see her tears.

“...I don’t really know how to say it, but I don’t want her to be sad.” I spoke with a clumsy tone, but with my honest thoughts. “I can’t stand seeing her sad, I can’t stand seeing her cry...and it makes me restless, forcing me to do something. I can’t sit still when she’s suffering.”

Thinking back on it, I've been feeling this way ever since the incident at the pool back in April—Stand By Me. The promise I shared with my late old man, asking her to stay with me so that I can protect her. That's right...I simply wanted to tell her these words, so I...

“...Onii-chan.” Suddenly, Suzutsuki let out an exhausted sigh. “You're an idiot, right?”

“...What?”

“You're a moron. A big, big dummy. A mega dummy. You're a chicken bastard, and a dense dummy. Not even realizing your own feelings like this, you're history's greatest mega dummy.”

“W-What do you mean?”

“Hmpf, I'm frustrated, so I won't tell you. Think about it yourself.” Suzutsuki stuck out her tongue, like a cheeky child. “But, it's fine. I'll save you.”

“Wha?”

“I'll save you. Both you and Subaru. It's my job as your master to ensure that my servants get along. Don't you worry, just leave it all to me.”

“L-Leave it to you...”

No, before that, what about turning you back to normal?

“Ah, I forgot. For that, we need to turn me back to normal, right. Ehehe, oopsies~”

“That's the problem. What idea do you have in mind?”

“Fufu, it's fine. It's super simple~ And, time is perfect too.” She said, and looked at her wristwatch.

Three more minutes. We have merely 180 seconds left in this date, so what does she—

“—Onii-chan.”

“What?”

“Um...—I love you!”

There, she declared with a cute voice, and smiled bright like a sunflower. Right after that...

“—!”

With no warning whatsoever, she **pressed her lips on mine.**

“Wha—”

I wanted to scream ‘W-W-What are you doing!?’ but by jumping away, I hit my head on the wall behind me. Gaaaah, curse this narrow gondola!

“Are you okay, **Jirou-kun?**”

“!?”

Hearing a dignified voice, my body shook. It was the confident and familiar voice of a certain rich lady. Not to mention, calling me ‘Jirou-kun’...

“S-Suzutsuki...”

“Fufu, it’s been a while.” Nonchalantly, acting like nothing had happened, my master—Suzutsuki Kanade smiled.

“.....”

You wench, showing such a calm expression. Do you know how worried we were about you? Yet you’re back this easily...

“I’m sorry, I must have caused a lot of trouble for you.”

“...It’s fine. I won’t forgive you this easily, so don’t apologize.”

“Oh my, then what should I do for you to forgive me?”

“Hell do I know.”

“Pay with my body?”

“Where did that choice even come from!”

“Right, if my body is your goal, then you would have already laid your hands on me when we slept in the same bed.”

“Wha...You...”

“Yes, I have all the memories that my younger self acquired over the past two weeks. You were quite attached to the young me, weren’t you.”

“~~~!”

“You lolicon bastard.”

“Shut up! It’s all because...”

“Knowing you, you probably gave me a new nickname as well, right? Something like...Derechuki-san?”

“Gyaaaaaa!”

“Oh my, I was just joking, but it seems like I was right.” Suzutsuki-san let out a snicker.

...Ahh, farewell, Derechuki-san, I won’t ever forget about you. And, welcome back, Yamitsuki-san. I want to forget about you as quickly as possible. However, that probably won’t happen, because you are Devil Suzutsuki. After all, you are like the devil reincarnated.

“Damn it, do you not have any weaknesses? You managed to deceive Masamune, so are you invincible now?” I complained with all my heart.

By using the technique of ‘Lying even to herself’, she managed to deceive Masamune. Now that she’s done it once, it’s over.

“—Not quite.” However, as if she guessed my own thoughts, Suzutsuki let out a dejected sigh. “That method is far too dangerous for me to use. After all, I won’t know when I will return to the real

me. That's why this experiment is a failure, and Usami-san will stay as my mortal enemy."

"R-Really now." I was a bit relieved.

Just as Suzutsuki stated, this method had far too many drawbacks to be used accurately.

"And this time, I fully understood everything. What's important doesn't change. Whether she sees through my lies or not—Usami-san will always be my archnemesis." Suzutsuki muttered with an awfully serious tone.

"...? What do you mean by that?"

"....." Suzutsuki stayed quiet for a while, only to continue. "I'll teach you about that another time. For now, we need to have you and Subaru make up, right?"

"Y-Yeah, you're right."

Now that Suzutsuki's case was resolved, the bigger problem is how I can make up with Konoe. That being said, with Suzutsuki Kanade, I have a strong ally at my side. She'll surely lend me her knowledge. We just promised that after all...Well, everything feels a bit awkward now because of that kiss. However, now that Suzutsuki returned to normal—

"Hm?"

...Wait, what is this sensation? It feels like something doesn't sit right with me. Like something doesn't add up. Hmm...I can't seem to remember. Well, I will probably remember it eventually.

"Then, first we should tell Konoe that you're back to normal."

That should be our first step. I'm sure that both Konoe and Kureha would be happy to hear that. No clue about Masamune though. Either way, now that that's decided...

"You can't do that, Jirou-kun."

However, Suzutsuki immediately denied my suggestion. She flashed a mature smile, almost like Derechuki-san never existed.

“There’s no need to tell Subaru and the others just yet. After all—that makes things much more interesting.”

“.....”

Ahh, I miss Derechuki-san after all. That’s what I thought while seeing her smile. At the same time, the gondola shook a bit, and the door was opened from the outside. Our jolly Ferris Wheel ride ended, and we reached the goal. It’s been a clean 19 minutes, and the ultimate length of my short date with Suzutsuki.

♀ × ♂

After getting off the Ferris Wheel, the sun had already started to set, with the night quickly approaching. It was the final day of Musashino Land. Since the renovation will start tomorrow, they even had some event planned for tonight. Looking at the pamphlet, it was planned as a small parade, which allowed visitors to participate, and fireworks to finish it off.

“Jirou-kun, you understand our plan, right?” Suzutsuki was back to her usual self, and went through everything with me. “I will keep acting like Derechuki-san, and make it so that you and Subaru can be alone for a bit.”

“Huh!? J-Just the two of us...I didn’t hear about that!”

“How much of a chicken bastard are you? You’re the one at fault for kissing Subaru like that. You have to be the one to resolve things. I’ll set up everything, but that’s about it.”

“Urk...”

Damn it, she’s not wrong, and I hate it. Although it was to protect Konoe’s secret, I still forced myself onto her. If so, then I have to be the one to resolve things. There’s also the misunderstanding regarding Masamune now that I think about it...

“Come on, Subaru and the others are coming down, you best pull this

off.”

“Y-Yeah.”

Our first strategy meeting ended, and the gondola reached the ground at a similar time. Seems like the three got off at the same time, and they all came storming outside once the door opened.

“Young lady! Why did you leave us behind like that!?”

“S-Sorry, Subaru, I just wanted to play a prank on Onii-chan.” She spoke with a childish voice.

...Amazing, it's perfect acting. I wouldn't be able to tell that she's back to normal. That's Suzutsuki Kanade for you. She definitely should start working for some scam company.

“No more pranks, okay?” Konoe scolded Suzutsuki, but still sighed in relief.

It seems like she hasn't realized that Suzutsuki has returned to her usual self. At the same time, I'm betting on the fact that she didn't see what happened inside the gondola, so the fact that Suzutsuki kissed me should be safe.

“Oh yeah, there's going to be a parade soon, right.”

“Yup, I'm looking forward to it, Kureha-chan.”

Kureha stood behind Konoe, smiling. Alright, she's in the dark as well. So far, everything is going according to our plan. This only leaves...Usami Masamune. She's the only one who can see through Suzutsuki's acting.

“Ah, Usamiin, come with me for a second~” Suzutsuki beckoned Masamune over.

Immediately after that, Masamune's expression froze up in shock. As I guessed, she saw through Suzutsuki immediately.

“Y-You...” Her mouth opened and closed in confusion.

Ah, this is bad. She's going to spill the beans about Suzutsuki.

"Quiet, Usami-san." Suzutsuki whispered into Masamune's ear, using a voice where the others couldn't hear her.

"S-Suzutsuki Kanade, so you are back!"

"Indeed. Amazing, to think you could see through me this quickly."

"Your nonsense and lies aren't going to deceive me!" Masamune was a bit flustered, but continued her conversation with Suzutsuki. "It must have happened during your Ferris Wheel ride, right!? During that time, you turned back to normal!"

"Yes, I somehow managed to return."

"So, why do you still continue to act like a child!?"

"Calm down, Usami-san. This is all to help Jirou-kun."

"For his sake...? Do you mean..." Masamune thought for a second.

Alright, great progress. Just now, Masamune said that she'd help me to make up with Konoe, so at this rate, she'll become my ally.

"Did...he ask you to keep acting like a child? Something like 'Please continue to call me Onii-chan', maybe?"

"....."

Hey now, won't you have a bit more trust in me, Masamune-san? I don't have any interest in forcing my classmate into such a messed up roleplay, okay?

"That would be just fine for me, but that sadly isn't the case. There's something he needs to do."

"...What are you plotting?"

"I'm glad you caught on. I'm trying to help Jirou-kun and Subaru make up again."

"Those two? Oh yeah, I heard they were having a fight, but..."

“As their master, I don’t want my servants to fight. That’s why, won’t you help me out?”

“I-I was planning on helping him from the very beginning!”

“Oh, really? Quite convenient, then. You help with our plan. I need to make sure that Jirou-kun and Subaru can be alone together. So, don’t tell the others that I’ve already returned to being normal.”

“Why?”

“As a child, I have more options.”

“...You really have a nasty personality. Well, it’s for the stupid chicken’s sake, and since we’re friends, I’ll help you out...”
Masamune nodded.

Alright, that’s another hurdle cleared. With this, I have Masamune as another ally. I wonder what kind of plan Suzutsuki came up with...

“Usami, what are you and the young lady whispering about?”

“...!? S-Subaru-sama...” Masamune twitched in shock.

The person in question, Konoe Subaru, was glaring at Masamune with a dubious look in his eyes. I guess their strategy meeting was a bit too long after all.

“I-I wasn’t ...!”

“Really?”

“Urk...” Masamune grew silent in the face of Konoe emitting so much pressure.

Woah, this ain’t a joke. Unlike Suzutsuki, Masamune isn’t good at lying. At this rate, Konoe might catch on that the usual Suzutsuki is back, and our plan will be ruined.

“Subaru, it can’t be helped that Usamin feels embarrassed.” Suzutsuki showed a wry smile, and supported Masamune. “After all, she gave me a very delicate question just now.”

“M-Meaning?”

“Namely, she wants her breasts to grow, and she wondered what she could do.”

“Huuuuh!?” Masamune screamed in shock at this sudden revelation.

Suzutsuki however ignored her, and continued making up excuses.

“So, I offered to give Usamin a breast massage.”

“I-I did hear that a girl’s breasts can grow with a massage, but...why would the young lady have to...”

“It’s fine, Subaru. This is for Usamin’s sake. As her master, I want to resolve whatever she may be worried about, as that is my duty.”

“Young lady...” Konoe felt her heart broken at her master’s devotion, and nodded in consent.

“Usami, be thankful for the young lady’s kindness.”

“H-Hold on! Just wait a moment, Subaru-sama! Don’t listen to Suzutsuki Kanade’s non—”

“Come on, don’t be so embarrassed. Just leave everything to me~”

“No!? Stop! What are you...No...Wha...Not this forcefully...”

“Did that hurt? Then, I’ll be a bit more gentle.”

“Fuwah!? N-No...not there...Mmm...!”

Suzutsuki had wrapped her arms around Masamune from behind her back, now fondling her breasts. Sorry, Masamune, there can be no victory without sacrifices. This is necessary for our plan. Of course, this just looks like Suzutsuki is using this situation to have fun again, but leaving that aside.



“S-Suzutsuki Kanade, you...!”

“What’s wrong? Would you have preferred the longer course?”

“I-I-I’m fine, really! I feel like I’ll just end up completely lost if you keep touching me!”

“Completely lost...in what way?”

“Shut up! Don’t make me say any more, or I’ll kick you for real!”
Masamune covered her own chest, and screamed.

Completely lost...how? I really wanted to ask that myself, but stopped myself right before that. I felt like I’d be the one to get kicked if I did. If there is one thing I can state, then it’s the fact that Suzutsuki is absolutely terrifying.

“Hey, Suzutsuki, aren’t you taking things a bit too far now?”

I felt like that went too far, so I threw in a warning. I understand that acting like a girl must be fun, but there’s a line she shouldn’t cross.

“Right, I feel like I went too far a bit. However...”

“What?”

“...No, it’s fine. I just wanted her to use the master ticket she got before, but she really knows how to hold back.”

“Master ticket...”

Oh yeah, the ticket that allows Masamune to give Suzutsuki any kind of order, no matter what it is. Hmmm, maybe Suzutsuki regretted giving her that ticket after all. Well, it was Derechuki-san who gave it out to Masamune.

“For crying out loud, I was such an innocent child. I didn’t think I would make such a thing and give it to her. Well, I don’t think that will get in the way of our plan this time.” She let out a faint sigh, and then flashed an innocent smile again.

I guess she’s back to acting like Derechuki-san now. It’s crazy at the speed she’s doing that. She’d be a great Hollywood actress, seriously.

“Hey, Kureha-chan, they said that visitors can dress up and participate at the parade, right?”

“Eh? Y-Yes. That’s what it said in the pamphlet.”

“Fufu, I see.” Suzutsuki flashed a joyful smile.

And then...she started thinking.

“Hey, Subaru, why don’t you participate in the parade as well?”

“Eh?!”

Met with this sudden order, the butler was left baffled.

“I mean, today is the last day before the renovation, so wouldn’t you want to make some memories?”

“However, young lady...”

“Come on, they offer to dress you up, even.”

“Eh!?”

“Now, let’s go.” Suzutsuki dragged Konoe into a nearby building, which had a big, large billboard in front of it, saying ‘Costume Parade Reception’.

Roughly ten minutes later, after we had been waiting, Suzutsuki and Konoe returned—However.

“...!”

Getting a good look at Konoe after her return, I was flabbergasted. She was wearing a dress. Not to mention one of the princesses you would see in fairy tales. Her dress consisted of a faint green color, covering Konoe’s entire body. We’ve met Konoe Subaru in her princess mode.

“Young lady, this is way too embarrassing...”

“Really? I think it looks great on you. Right, Kureha-chan?”

“Y-Yes, it looks wonderful. I have trouble even seeing you as a boy. Not to mention, are you using pads?”

“O-O-O-Of course, I’m a boy! I have no breasts!”

“R-Right! It just looked so natural...” Kureha was utterly entranced, because it looked too good on Konoe almost.

A green dress...Crap, what is this. She looked like a boy not too long ago, so now the gap is just making her look even more adorable. Not to mention that the dress was very prim and proper. Despite that, her shoulders were in the open, giving her an alluring feeling all the same. She even had a tiara on her head, looking like she was part of some movie screening. Amazing, they might get her for that mouse land park.

“Cute. It’s truly cute, Subaru.”

“T-Thank you very much...”

“But, what are you wearing beneath that dress? You’re not wearing girl’s underwear beneath that, are you?”

“!”

“I’d like to check, so can you let me take a look?”

“!?”

“What’s wrong? You’re a boy, so it shouldn’t be that big of a deal, right? Just lift up your skirt a bit.”

“~~~!” Even while being embarrassed, Konoe nodded with a ‘U-Understood’ and started lifting her skirt.



Waaah, what is she doing!?

“Konoe! You don’t have to go that far!”

“B-But, the young lady’s orders are...”

“It’s just a child talking nonsense, don’t take it so seriously!”

“Ehhh, I wanna see some underwear!”

“You be quiet for a second!”

Damn Yamitsuki-san, you’re playing around way too much. She’s using her position as a child way too much.

“Ah, Subaru. The participants of the parade are gathering over there.” Suzutsuki said, and pointed at an open plaza.

Looking over, I saw several people that wore familiar fashion to Konoe. For example, Dracula, Frankenstein, or a werewolf. A lot of horror-themed costumes, huh. Oh yeah, this is the season of Halloween after all. There’s some people who are wearing pumpkin heads.

“Come on, over with you. We’ll be waiting here.”

“Ah...Understood, young lady.” Konoe sounded embarrassed, but still walked towards the plaza.

There, Suzutsuki whispered into my ear.

“Jirou-kun, what are you spacing out for?”

“Eh?”

“I gave you this chance to become alone.”

“But, Konoe will participate in the...”

“Look at yourself, I think you’re plenty equipped for the parade yourself.”

I was confused at first, but I quickly realized what Suzutsuki was talking about. Right now, I’m still wearing the costume. I wouldn’t stick out in the middle of that parade.

“Not to mention, you can just dip out if push comes to shove. Just call for Subaru and skip it.”

“Quite the forceful method, alright.”

“You want to make up with her, right? You might as well kiss her again, you know?”

“Wha...S-Stop joking around! Where did that come from?”

“You forced yourself onto her before, right?”

“That’s the whole reason things ended up as messy as they are now!”

That’s right, I kissed Konoe in that closet. Without that, things would have not ended so miserably.

“...Ah.”

I get it. Now I understand it. This feeling like something didn’t sit right with me, which I felt inside the Ferris Wheel, the reason for that was...

“Hey, Suzutsuki.”

“Hm? You sound awfully serious now.”

“Well, I was just wondering——Why did you turn back to normal after kissing me?” I asked with a quiet voice.

That’s right, why did a kiss with me trigger her return? I’ve been curious about that this entire time. This isn’t some fairy tale with a sleeping princess. Only children believe that a kiss could relieve a curse.

“.....”

Silence followed. The young lady was thinking.

“That’s...because I wanted to be spoiled by you, Jirou-kun.”

“Huh?”

“My childish self said it, right? ‘Once I’m satisfied, I can turn back to normal’. If I had to guess, my childish self wanted to get all your attention, and be spoiled...that’s why I returned with a kiss. That’s the ultimate form of being spoiled by someone.”

“Being spoiled...”

“I’ve been rather cold lately, acting as Yamitsuki-san, right? Because of that, my childish self wanted to be with you as much as possible, and enjoy her time. But, things couldn’t always stay like this.”

“.....”

“That’s why that was my final piece of being spoiled by you. That kiss acted as the final cut. That’s why I decided to not act that way towards you anymore.”

“Does that mean...you’re going back to Yamitsuki-san?”

“Indeed. That’s what I told you, right? I’ll continue to bully you forever...”

“That’s true, but...”

Why? She wanted to be spoiled. Basically, she wanted us to be good friends, as we’ve been, right? Yet, why is she saying that she’ll become Yamitsuki-san? It doesn’t make any sense. She’s contradicting her words and actions.

“Now, go after Subaru. I’ll explain everything to Kureha-chan.”

“Y-Yeah...”

I was pressed by Suzutsuki’s words, I started running down the same path Konoe took.

“—Farewell, Jirou-kun.”

I felt like I heard Suzutsuki’s voice in the distance. I turned around, but she was already facing the others. However, for a split second, it felt like I saw a saddened expression on her face, right as she turned it away from me.



Chapter 5: The Night Of The Parade

“Konoe!”

At the open plaza in the amusement park, I finally managed to find Konoe, and called out to her.

“...Hm.” Princess-dress Butler-kun turned towards me.

Her expression was clearly filled with displeasure. I knew it, she’s still hung up on that whole incident with Masamune.

“What is it? Were you ordered by the young lady to participate as well?”

“No, if anything, she said...”

“What?”

“...Well, she said we could just skip the parade.”

“.....”

Silence. An awkward silence filled the space between us...Come on, say something, me. Are you just going to stay quiet now? Just deal with the embarrassment, and talk with her.

“.....”

I can’t. Everytime I look at Konoe’s face, the scenery of our kiss in that closet comes playing back in my head. What is this, why can’t I just let go of that? What is going on, this is almost like—

“...Alright.” The one to break the silence was Konoe.

With her translucent eyes, she looked directly at me.

“Jirou, I have a request, can I?”

“A request?”

“...Yeah.” Konoe faintly bit her lips in embarrassment.

And then, like she tried her hardest to form those words.

“I want you—to go on a date with me.”

♀ × ♂

“H-Hey, I bought it for you.”

“...Yeah, thanks.”

Konoe sat on a bench located near the open plaza, and I just returned with two crepes I bought.

“Have a seat, Jirou.”

“Y-Yeah.”

We exchanged a few awkward words, and I sat down next to Konoe. This is a date. A date with the Subaru-sama. To people from the Subaru-sama Fanclub, like Nakuru, this would be one hell of a sight. And if Kureha saw us like this, I’d probably see hell myself. However...

“T-This is pretty good.”

“...Yeah, you’re right.”

As before, no coherent conversation happened, as everything was awkward. Also, it’s clearly my fault. I don’t know why, but I just feel so nervous. I saw no other option, so I gulped down some of the crepe, to which a sweet taste of honey filled my mouth. Can’t even tell if it’s delicious or not.

This is weird. Something’s wrong about this. Not to mention Derechuki-san’s words that still flew around inside my head—You understand yourself this much, and you still haven’t caught on to your own feelings?

“.....”

Just worrying about it wouldn't do me any good, so I thought about the words I said back then. Suzutsuki asked me 'How do you feel about Subaru?', and I said that I didn't want to see her crying face. That's why, that's what I swore back in April. Stand By Me. I wanted to say that to her. That's why...

“...Konoe.”

As the plaza was growing noisy with all the other people wearing costumes, I broke the silence between the two of us.

“Why did you invite me out on a date?”

“...Hmpf.” Konoe stopped munching on her crepe, and grew silent.

Another short pause followed, until...

“Because you went on a date with Usami, right?”

“What?”

“L-Like I said! When we were walking through the haunted house, you were having fun with Usami, right! That was a date, wasn't it. That's why I wanted to try it myself. That's all this is.” She said, and averted her gaze again.

This isn't good, she's cutting off every attempt at me talking to her again...!

“...You're wrong.” I said with a quiet, but deep voice.

“I'm wrong? In what way?”

“It's true that I went on a date with Masamune, but that was solely a type of treatment to fix my gynophobia.”

“Eh...”

“Not to mention, we weren't just playing around. We also talked about Suzutsuki, and how we could cure her. She offered to help us.”

“.....” Konoe directed her face downwards, muttering. “...I see, so it was all just my misunderstanding.”

Once again, silence followed her words. This time, it felt much heavier than before. Even though we're at the amusement park, it's no fun at all. The parade seemingly started, as the people in costumes lined up. Yet, the air around us and the bench was cold, and disheartening.

“.....”

—Think. What do I want to do? That's obvious, I want us to make up. I want to get along with Konoe. Over these past two weeks, we tried hard to fix Suzutsuki, but things still stayed awkward between us. If anything, things got worse the more time passed. The reason for all of that was—

“...I'm sorry.”

These words just fell out of my mouth. Because it practically came out of nowhere, Konoe looked at me with a shocked ‘Eh?’. Even so, I continued talking.

“Sorry, Konoe. I forgot the most important thing. Two weeks ago, in that closet, I...forcefully kissed you. And yet, I didn't even try to apologize.”

That's right, I'm the asshole. I'm the despicable bastard. How could I forget about that? Even if I said that it was to protect her secret, I assaulted her like that. Without even considering her own feelings. But, because I would always be reminded of that kiss, I forgot the most important part—to apologize. It's all my fault that things ended up this awkward. That's why...

“Sorry, Konoe. If you could forgive me for what I did...could we get along again?” I asked, my voice quivering in uncertainty.

I had to be the one to make things right, since I caused all of this. So, I have to be the one to create a trigger for us to make up again. Otherwise, what am I even doing with myself?

“.....!”

However, because of the scenery opening up in front of me, all my determination was blown away—Tears. Large, translucent drops of water ran down Konoe Subaru's cheek, falling to the ground.

“...Dummy.” She muttered with a quivering alto voice, but those words reached me nonetheless. “Dummy. You're a big dummy, Jirou.” She moved her lips, as I stood there in a daze. “...There's no way...I could forgive you.” She said, clearly.

“Konoe...”

“Because...you did that to protect my secret, right? If anything, I should be the one to apologize. But, because you kissed me back then, I just felt so embarrassed, I couldn't think about anything else...”

“.....”

“I knew things couldn't stay like this. I wanted to make up. But, the embarrassment stopped me from apologizing. I couldn't muster up the courage...”

“.....”

“That's why...I thought some kind of trigger was necessary. I wanted to make up today at this amusement park. But, when I saw you on a date with Usami, my head just turned blank, and I vented out my anger...!”

“.....”

Ahh, I see. So I wasn't the only one who was troubled over this. Konoe also wanted to make up. But, why? We're finally back on the right track, and yet she's crying...

“You know—I was happy.” She said, with a weeping voice. “I was really happy to hear that you wanted to make up.”

“.....”

“I was worried this entire time. What if we kept going like this, started fighting, and drifted apart? What if we couldn't stay the way

we were before?”

“.....”

“That’s why, hearing you say that, I just felt so happy, and relieved, I couldn’t hold back the tears...” She turned towards me, and smiled.

...Thank god. Those are tears of joy. She’s happy that we can make up. And—this makes me happy as well. Not to mention.

“Konoe, stop crying, will you. I get that you’re happy, but it’s not that big of a thing to cry over, right? Here, I’ll wipe off your tears for you.”

“Y-Yeah, thanks.”

I took out a handkerchief to wipe away her tears, to which she showed a bashful smile...Yeah. I’m glad. Getting to see her smile, I feel relieved. Just by seeing her smile, my entire body fills up with warmth. It’s a thousand times better than seeing her cry. I just wanted to stop seeing Konoe’s crying face, and instead wanted her to smile—

“...Ah.”

I get it. Everything makes sense now. Or rather, I just realized it. I found the answer to the question Suzutsuki asked me inside of the gondola—How do I feel about Konoe?

“...Haha.” I couldn’t help but let out a laugh because of how pathetic I was.

It’s weird. Why did I never realize it before? Yeah, it makes sense why Suzutsuki would call me an idiot. How do I feel about Konoe? The answer is simple.

“Waaah!”

There, together with Konoe’s delighted voice, the starry sky lit up—Fireworks. Oh yeah, they did mention they planned some fireworks, I think the pamphlet mentioned that. More and more flowers filled the sky. As if that was the signal, the costume parade started moving.

Music started playing in the plaza, enticing even the people watching. So that I wouldn't lose against the music, I strongly called out to Konoe.

"Konoe."

"...Yeah? What's that serious face for, Jirou?" Konoe turned towards me, still in her princess dress.

Her large eyes were looking up at me, as the fireworks emphasized her beautiful features. Facing Konoe, I said the words I wanted to say the most right now.

"I like you."

♀ × ♂

I know it sounds weird coming from me, but...I really jumped the gun. But, I finally realized my own feelings. I realized that I like Konoe. I don't want to see her sad, I want to protect her. If it's possible, I want to always be with her—Stand By Me. I'm sure that these feelings mean that I love Konoe. There's no mistaking this, for sure.

Thinking about it, this might just be my first love. Until now, because of my gynophobia, I never even thought about coming to love a girl. That's why this confession came out of nowhere. I didn't even consider what could happen after this, caused by this.

But...if Konoe agreed, and if we started dating, then...Ahhhh, stop it, I'm getting ahead of myself. Not to mention that Konoe is a crossdressing butler. Even if we started dating, we can't show that off at school. Either she'll be found out as a girl, or we'll be used as BL material. Well, most of that second part would be because of Nakuru.

Before anything though, Konoe's feelings matter the most. How does she feel about me? Right now, we're best friends. At the summer festival, she said that she wanted us to be best friends. However, that is different from liking me as a member of the opposite sex. I'm curious.

Maybe that's why I was rushing this confession. I desperately wanted

to know how Konoe feels about me. I wanted to know my position inside Konoe's heart—

“.....”

Konoe seemed to be surprised at my confession. And then, she cast her face down. Night had arrived at the amusement park, and just with the lights around us, I couldn't fully identify her expression. Silence ensued, filling the air between us. I don't even know how much time passed, and the fireworks were still filling the skies. Filled with anxiety and expectation, I waited for Konoe's words.

“...Jirou.” An alto voice reached my ears.

The princess Konoe Subaru called out my name. And then, she raised her head, looking directly at me, as her mouth opened—



Chapter 6: Her Turn

“...Nii-san, I’m coming in, okay?”

A hesitant voice rang out. After knocking on the door, my little sister, wearing a maid dress, entered the room.

“You have to get up, Nii-san, it’s morning already. Or, are you still not feeling well? You’ve been in bed ever since we got home from the amusement park yesterday...”

Oddly enough, my little sister was worried about me. Indeed, yesterday was the day we went to the amusement park. After returning from Musashino Land, I’ve been in my room the entire time. Normally I would have had to sleep in that tent again, but for whatever reason, upon coming home, Ichigo-san guided me to this guest room.

“Eat breakfast, and cheer up. Onee-sama is back to normal, so we’re all waiting for you.” She called to me, as I hid myself inside my blanket.

Oh yeah, Suzutsuki returned to normal. Yesterday during our amusement park visit, when Konoe and I went to the plaza, she explained to everyone that she had returned to her usual self. Though, she kept the trigger for that a secret. But, none of that really matters right now. What I need the most is—

“...Kureha.”

“W-What is it, Nii-san?”

She must have been flustered at my awfully gloomy voice, as she stuttered when giving a response. I however ignored all of that, and voiced my request.

“...Won’t you pull some wrestling moves on me?”

“Eh?”

“I want to taste some of your wrestling moves. The one you do every morning.”

“B-But...”

“What, do you not want to?”

“I mean, I don’t have a problem with it, but...I just thought it’s odd.”

“What is?”

“Well, you never asked me for that yourself until now...”

“It’s fine, right? I just feel like it.”

“Y-You feel like it...”

“Ahhhhhhh! Just do it already! Normally you’d do it without even waiting for my consent, right!? Come on! Don’t hold back! Use me as a punching bag!” I screamed, while throwing away the blanket.

In response, Kureha twitched in shock, and even used polite language with ‘Y-Yes, I understand!’. Following that, she started running, aiming at the desk in the corner of the room. She used it as a stepping stool, with her back turned towards me, and leaped into the air. The trajectory of her leap was directed at me. Mid-air, her small body started twirling. Right upon nearing my body, she turned her own towards me, and—

“Gahaa!?”

It was a stardust press. It was a finishing move differing from the moonsault, with quite the difficulty spike compared to other moves. Met with this impact, my body convulsed on the bed, which creaked in agony.

“H-How was that, Nii-san? I feel like I really nailed it, but...” Kureha sounded hesitant oddly enough, and got off of me.

Yeah, she’s right. The angle, timing, impact, and impressionability, it was all perfect as a finisher. I had no complaints there, however...

“...Not yet, Kureha.”

“Eh...”

“This isn’t nearly enough.”

“N-Not enough?”

“More. Give me a combo and full course like you always do.”

“B-But...”

“What’s wrong? This isn’t all you can do, right?”

“~~~! F-Fine! If you’re that adamant on it, I’ll show you! Don’t complain to me after though!”

“Yeah! Come at me with your full power!”

“Aye aye, sir!”

I must have tickled her pride, because Kureha was now burning with motivation. She lifted up my body from the bed, and began her onslaught of high-level wrestling moves...

“Take this! Running Three!”

“Gyaaah!”

“Following that, a Northern Lights Bomb!”

“Guuuuuh!”

“To finish it off, a Japanese Ocean Cyclone Suplex Hold!”

“Gyaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah!”

My body slammed into the bed, making me worry if she didn’t accidentally break it with all of that. Or I would have worried about that, if I wasn’t too busy groaning in pain.

“T-This is enough, right? Anymore than this, and your body will...”
Kureha’s shoulders went up and down, as she was gasping for air.

However...

“...No, not yet.” I pushed up my aching body, and continued.

“Kureha, more. That wasn’t enough.”

“Nya!?”

“Is this the strength of the oldest daughter of our Sakamachi family? It’s not, right? More. Give me one that’ll knock the memories out of me.”

“Wha...Wha...”

“What’s wrong, my little sister!? Hurry up! Mess me up! I’m still brimming with energy! Use me as a punching bag!”

“Nyaaaaaaaaaaaaa! Nii-san went crazyyyyyyyyy!” She screamed, and ran out of the room.

“Urk...”

As expected, the damage still caught up to me, and I fell backwards onto the bed. If possible, I really wanted something that would erase all these awful memories. These memories that keep haunting me...

♀ × ♂

“—I’m sorry.”

These words reached my ears, as the sky was filled with fireworks.

“Eh...”

I was unable to react, merely freezing up. My thoughts came to an ultimate halt, as Konoe continued.

“You know, I’m really happy to hear you feel that way...I also...r-really like you, but I don’t think we can go out...”

“.....”

“That’s why, let’s stay...as best friends. That, **for now**, is probably the best...”

“.....”

“...Jirou...Do you not like this answer after all...?” Konoe looked at me, her gaze filled with anxiety.

Even now, she looked close to breaking out in tears.

“.....”

...I know. What I should be doing right now, so that she doesn't break out in tears.

“—Got it.” I tried to respond with a calm voice. “Sorry, Konoe, for saying something like that out of the blue.”

“Y-Yeah...But, are you sure?”

“About what?”

“I mean...that we'll stay best friends...”

“Sounds great to me. Being friends with you is a privilege.”

“...I-I see...”

For some reason, Konoe showed a gloomy expression.

“A-Anyway, I'll participate in the costume parade now.” She said, almost like she wanted to run away.

Still wearing her princess dress, she mixed beautifully into the crowd. I would have loved to join her, but my legs wouldn't move. Like a boxer that passed out while standing after a fierce match, I just fell backwards onto the ground. My head was filled with the words Konoe, the girl I like, threw at me.

‘I also...r-really like you, but I don't think we can go out...’

So basically, she likes me as a friend, but not as a romantic interest.

‘That's why, let's stay...as best friends. That, **for now**, is probably the best...’

In other words, she wants us to stay friends from here on out.

‘...Jirou...Do you not like this answer after all...?’

She was even being considerate of me. Even though I confessed, she was trying to be kind. Ah, I see...Basically, I was...

“...Rejected.”

Sakamachi Kinjirou, in the fall of my 17th year on this earth, I confessed to the girl I love, and got rejected, my first love shattered. My very first experience in love—ended with a broken heart.

♀ × ♂

“Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhh!”

End of flashback. Assaulted with a fierce headache, I could only hold my head and scream. I was rejected. Right when I finally caught on to my own feelings, I was rejected mercilessly. Is this an example of how harsh life can be? The inside of my head was filled with Tchaikovsky’s ‘Sérénade mélancolique’, but on repeat. Eh? You don’t know what song that is? Look it up right now! Or download it! This is my theme song starting today!

“...Ahhhh.” I let out a sigh that hurt deep inside of me.

My thoughts just wouldn’t stay calm. The second I’m trying to explain my BGM, I’m already a lost cause. What should I even do now? Today is the 10th of October, a Sunday. I was still a servant in the Suzutuski residence, so I should get to my work soon, but...

“...I really don’t wanna work.” I muttered, while looking up at the ceiling.

I may be still a student who has to fully experience the harshness of society, but those who work every single day surely will sympathize with me here. Though to be perfectly honest, I don’t mind the act of working, the problem is just that Konoe is working here as well. The person who broke my heart was working in the same location as me.

“Urgh...”

Tough...What kind of torture is this. I don't think I'll actually be able to do my work. Or rather, what face should I make when running into Konoe? Ever since that confession yesterday, we haven't even talked a word.

"Ahhhh..."

I can't. I'll just sleep. I'm not sleepy at all, but that's the best I can do. I can't muster up any strength to act. But, maybe the damage from being heartbroken will be gone after I wake up. I'll just wait for time to pass, and my wounds to heal. The best I can do right now is run away.

"...Hm?"

I know I was being pathetic, but the best I could do was snuggled up in my bed. Right then however, I heard footsteps approaching the room.

"Odd Jobs-san." I heard a familiar robotic voice, coming from Saotome Ichigo.

She is a maid here at the Suzutsuki residence, who now opened the door after knocking once.

"...Ichigo-san?"

"YES. Good morning, Good Jobs-san, there's something I want to tell you." She walked towards me, devoid of any expression as always.

It seems like she's gotten over her cold just fine. She probably wanted to wake me up after Kureha failed. I guess it makes sense, she's my senior, so it wouldn't be weird for her to come here and lecture me.

"Odd Jobs-san."

However, her following words greatly surpassed anything I could have imagined.

"You're fired."

"...What?" I froze up in shock.

Fired? So basically...I'm getting kicked out? Why? Because I didn't come out of my room? But, I wasn't even in here a whole day, so that judgement is far too quick...

"But, Odd Jobs-san." She ignored my confusion, and continued. "You're not the only one who gets fired."

"Eh?"

"Your little sister—Sakamachi Kureha—is fired as well."

"Huuuuuuuh!?"

Eh? Why? My head can't keep up. What is going on? Why did Kureha get fired? She was properly doing her job, right? I mean, I actually don't know if she's doing her work properly, we're talking about Kureha after all. She might not be that useful after all. Or, it was my responsibility and I failed. But, what is going to happen now?

We were taken in as servants as a condition to live here, because we had no place to go to after our house burned down. The plan was for us to stay a solid month until the renovations were over, so why...

"For now." Ichigo-san kept her indifferent expression, and continued. "Maybe you should hear the details from her."

"...Her?"

"YES. I will return to my work. It was a brief time, but this is farewell. See you never again, Odd Jobs-san." She said, and left the room, switching positions with another maid.

This time, a girl wearing her hair in twintails entered—Usami Masamune. She slowly walked towards me.

"H-Hey, Masamune, what is this about?" I asked, confused.

In response, the nasty rabbit took a deep breath.

"Stupid chicken, the person who got you fired was me."

"Wha..." I stared at Masamune in disbelief, but it didn't seem like she

was lying.

Eh? What is going on? Why does she have the right to fire me?

“I got the master ticket, right? The childish Suzutsuki Kanade gave it to me. With that ticket, I could give Suzutsuki Kanade any order I wanted. I used it so that you would get fired.”

“.....!”

No no no, what the hell are you doing? You’re robbing me and Kureha of a stable place to live.

“.....”

...No, wait a second. She was there when we learned of what happened to our house, she should know about our situation. Yet, she got us fired...

“It’s fine. Stupid chicken. I have my own thoughts about this. If you don’t have any place to stay...you can just come to my place.”

“Y-Your place...”

As I was lost and confused, Masamune puffed out her chest in confidence. Following that, she pointed at me, and declared with a strong tone like she was ordering me.

“You will become my family!”



Afterword

It's been a while! Recently, I've fully turned into a shut-in, name's Asano Hajime. Well, recently if I don't pay attention, I pretty much only go out to eat, buy books, or other daily necessities...Yes, that's how things are. Since I pretty much only write at home, that just makes it even worse.

A bit ago, my friend called me, saying "Are you okay? Maybe you should get out of the house for a while?", with an awfully serious tone. I wonder what kind of character that friend categorizes me as... It still plagues me to this day.

And then, the finishing blow was when I confessed this to my editor with "This is bad! Last month, I only left my house X times!", only for him to go "Yeah, and half of those times were meeting with me, right?", as he threw a counter retort at me. I need...I need to leave my house...After I finish this afterword, I will definitely go outside...

Anyway, while I was busy indulging in my writing activities, [Mayo Chiki!] reached its 8th volume! This time around, we had the Suzutsuki Residence arc's second part, with the young lady causing as much of a ruckus as always, so the people who have yet to buy this volume, I sincerely pray that you slam this book onto the cash register with a spear tackle!

Moving on to my thanks. First, my editor Shouji-sama, thank you for offering me the time I needed even when you were so busy. With the incident I mentioned in this afterword, I really was in your care, I have no words of gratitude...Please continue to support me from today on as well.

Next, my wonderful illustrator Kikuchi Seiji-sama, who always grants me so many wonderful illustrations for the [Mayo Chiki!] series. Everytime I look at the illustrations, I feel energy filling my body. Thank you very much for everything in your busy days.

To the editor-in-chief, everyone from the editorial department, the

proofreader, the designer, everybody involved in printing and publishing, the authors that helped me run away from reality with alcohol, NEET-sensei who is responsible for the comicalization, Eichi Yuu-sensei who is responsible for the spin-off [MayoMayo!], everybody who is helping with the anime adaptation, and of course all my readers, thank you very much. It is all thanks to you that I get to eat, work, and live my days. From the bottom of my heart, I thank you.

Now then, it is time for the preview corner. The following 9th volume will deal with the Masamune Cohabitation arc. Our protagonist and Kureha suddenly ended up living together with Masamune, after her sudden offer. Naturally, Subaru and Konoe (Subaru and Konoe are the same person though?) won't be able to sit still after hearing about that...Like this, the story will be progressing.

Next up, a bit of advertising. As you might know, the 2nd volume of the [Mayo Chiki!] comicalization goes on sale the same day as this light novel volume! Thank you very much, NEET-sensei! In the manga, we just reached Masamune's appearance, so it'll be a great combination if you buy the manga as well!

Following that, the spin-off series [MayoMayo!], running in [NyanTYPE] (under the Kadokawa imprint) also has its first volume come out at the same time as this volume! Eichi-sensei, thank you very much! The Suzutsuki Residence arc may have ended in the light novel, but [MayoMayo!] still has its main focus on that! It shows the characters that weren't introduced in the light novel, such as Hinata Mayoi and Samejima Kosame, as well as the other three, so if you're interested, please check it out!

Finally, another important announcement...It's been decided that I will write a new light novel series. The title of such is [Recommended Girlfriend For The First Time], and its first volume will release in one month in July. Takanae Kyourin-sama will be responsible for the illustrations. Just like [Mayo Chiki!], it will be released under the MF Bunko J imprint, so I have eternal gratitude for the editor-in-chief, and my editor Shouji-sama for giving me this chance. Thank you very much for giving me, an author that merely debuted not even two years ago, a chance like this.

The story of this series revolves around a shut-in protagonist who aims to nail his high school debut, and a heroine who dreams of doing a high school debut, as they enjoy various experiences together, basically being a school youth romcom.

Of course, I'll continue to put my everything into [Mayo Chiki!] so that it doesn't lose in the slightest, I'm sure that the people who enjoy this series might also be interested in my new one, so please check it out!

Anyway, while hoping that we will hear from each other again, and as I try my hardest to come up with more material for the two series, I will step on the gas pedal with no breaks in sight, so please take care of me.

Asano Hajime

Credits

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